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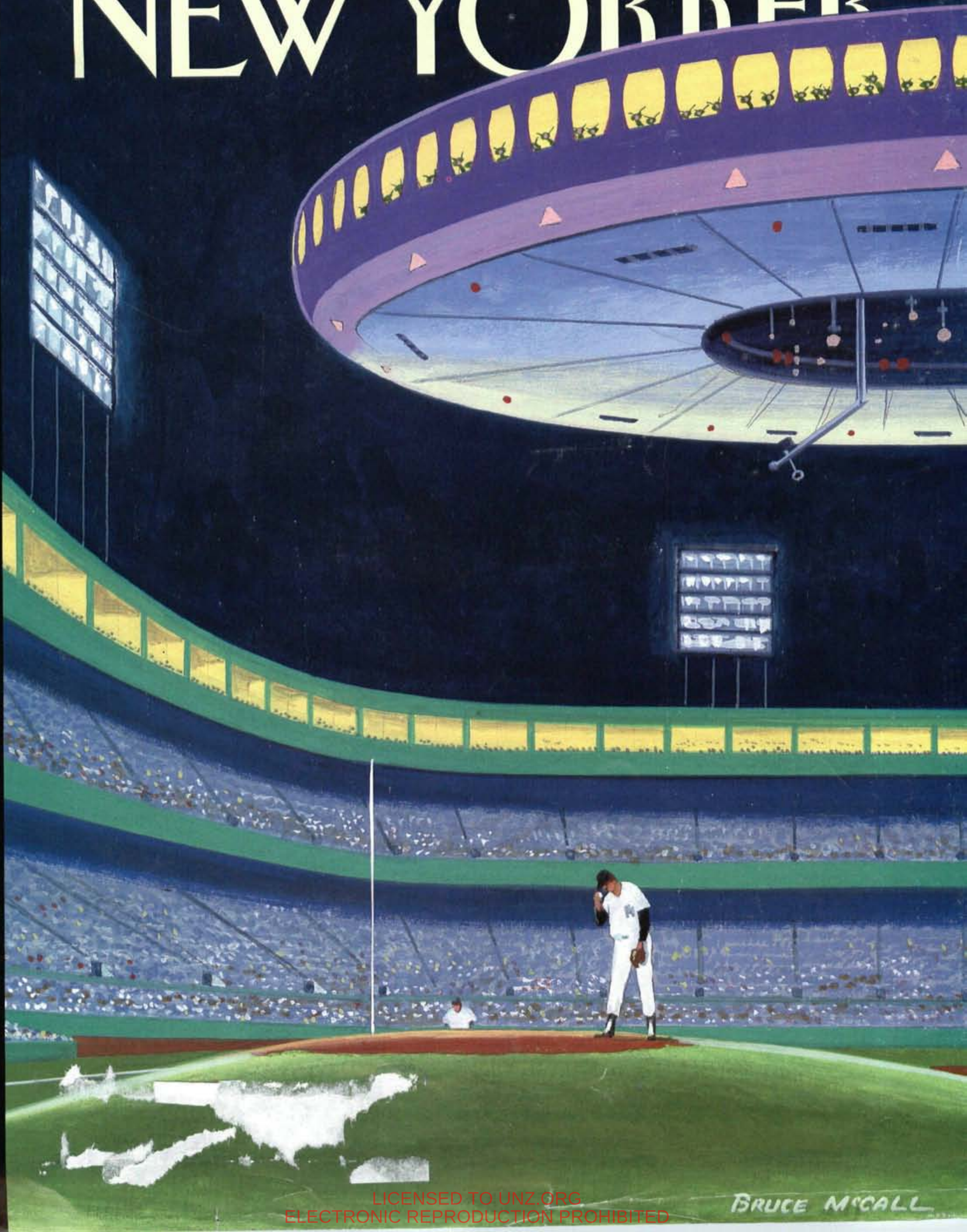
THE NEW YORKER



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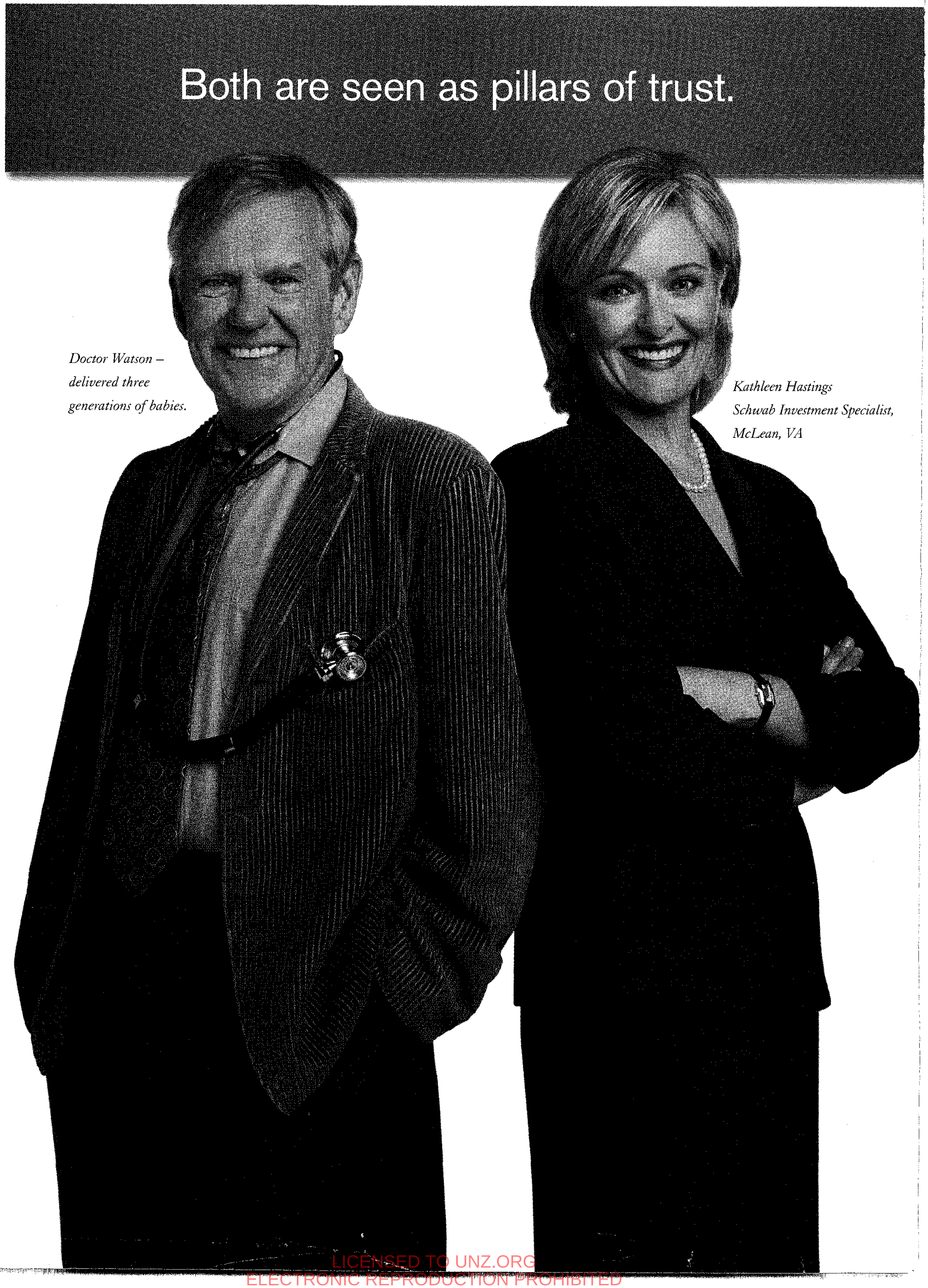
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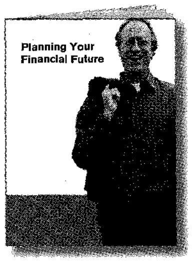

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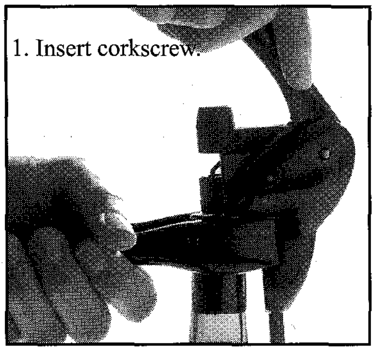

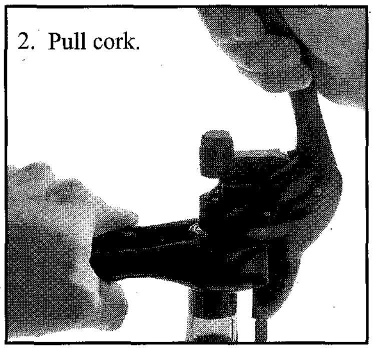

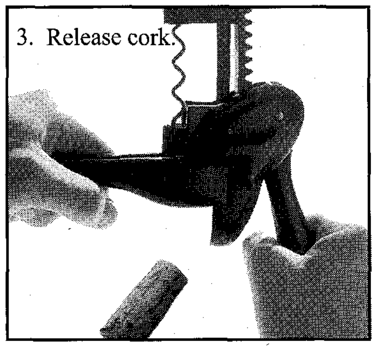

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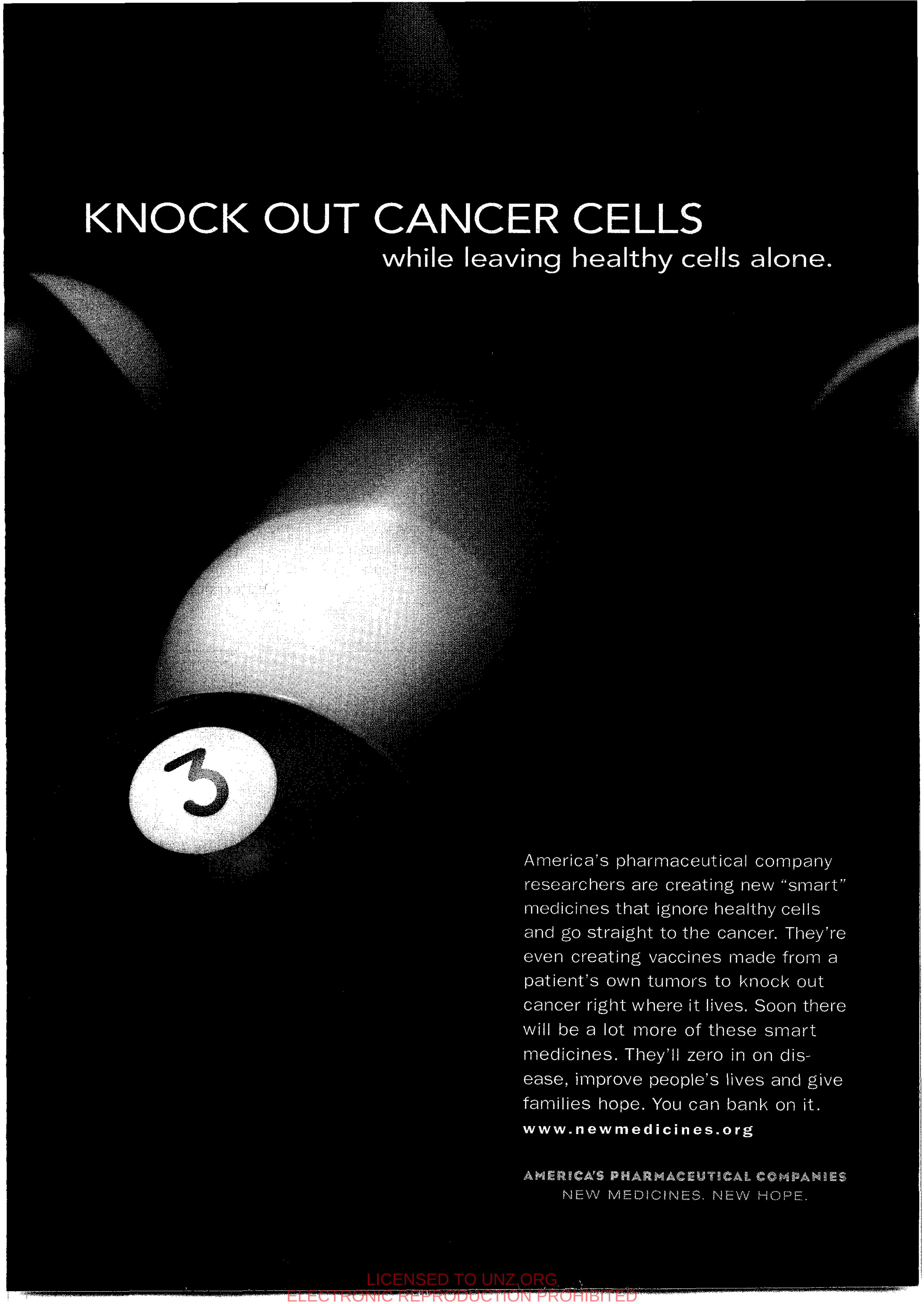

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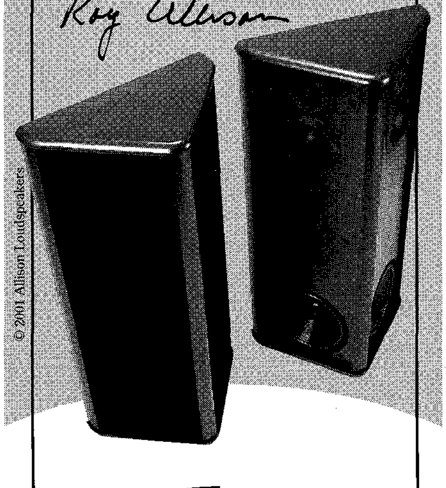

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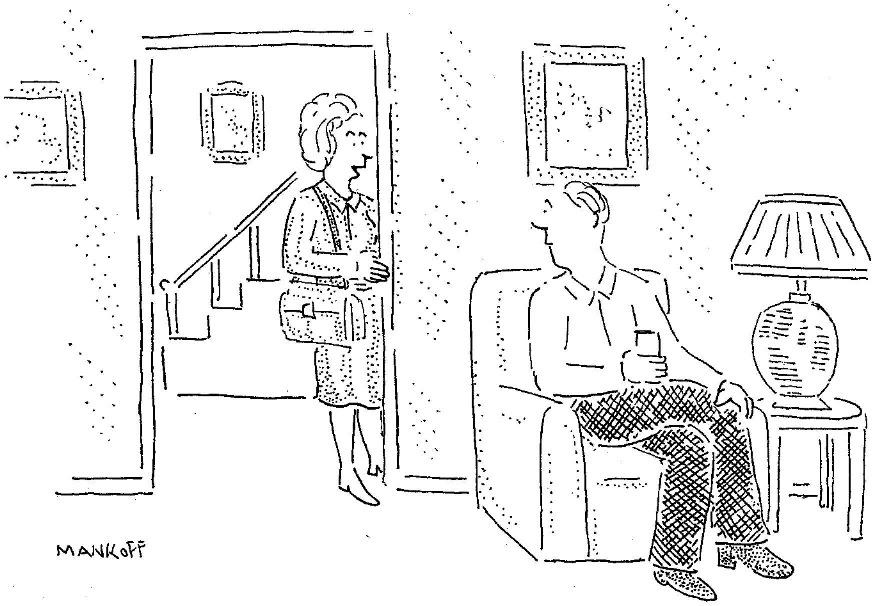

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THE MAIL

SOLDIERS' STORIES

General Wesley Clark, looking for a model of an effective American military expedition, refers Joe Klein ("Closework," October 1st) to Operation Just Cause: "Panama, the capture of Noriega. It was very successful." Operation Just Cause is, if anything, an example to be wary of. General Noriega, a cocaine and arms smuggler, was a valued ally during the Reagan years and into the elder Bush's Presidency. It was only when he stopped making Panama available as a staging ground for Contra incursions into Nicaragua that the United States decided to act. Clark points out that the American forces in Panama managed to execute an arrest warrant against Noriega. But estimates of the number of civilians killed in the process, in a terrain far better suited to this sort of operation than that facing soldiers looking for Osama bin Laden, run into the thousands. Noriega now sits in prison, convicted in a trial marked by repeated prosecution assertions of "national security" which prevented his lawyers from presenting a full defense in his behalf—hardly a proud moment for either American jurisprudence or the American foreign policy that created the defendant.

Robert Curtis Lewis
Independence, Mo.

Klein asserts that a squadron of Delta Force commandos, backed by U.S. Army Rangers, "botched" an operation in Mogadishu, Somalia, in October, 1993. While the mission was undoubtedly a public-relations disaster for the Clinton Administration, it was botched only under the unrealistic standard that anything other than zero American casualties should be deemed a failure. The soldiers' principal objective that day was to capture two top lieutenants of Muhamad Farah Aidid, and they did. As a measure of the odds they faced, eighteen American soldiers died in the raid, as opposed to about five hundred Somalis. Incidentally, two of the most recent recipients of the Medal of Honor were Delta commandos who gave their lives in Mogadishu trying to save fellow-soldiers. They deserve to be judged by what they accomplished, not by how it played for politicians back home.

Adam Goldman
Birmingham, Ala.

LOCAL HEROES

Senator Hillary Clinton tells Nicholas Lemann of her hope that after September 11th big government will come to be seen as part of the solution ("The Hillary Perspective," October 8th). In fact, it still looks like part of the problem. The firefighters and emergency workers whose heroism she appropriates to "government" were almost all agents of local communities, not the federal government. Our national leaders, on the other hand, let us down terribly in the areas of intelligence and national security. What's more, by adopting a long-term policy of indifference toward the Third World and international relations, big government has only managed to contribute to the pervasive hurt, anger, and fear our country inspires.

Michael K. Heaney
Madison, Conn.

NOTES ON NEWSPEAK

John Updike, in his review of Peter J. Conradi's biography of Iris Murdoch, quotes Conradi as saying, "Both the saint and the true artist were equally, in her coinage, 'unpersons'" (Books, October 1st). But Murdoch probably borrowed the word from George Orwell. In his novel "1984," "unperson" is the Newspeak way to refer to "people who had been vaporized and were therefore considered never to have existed."

Joel J. Brattin
Worcester, Mass.

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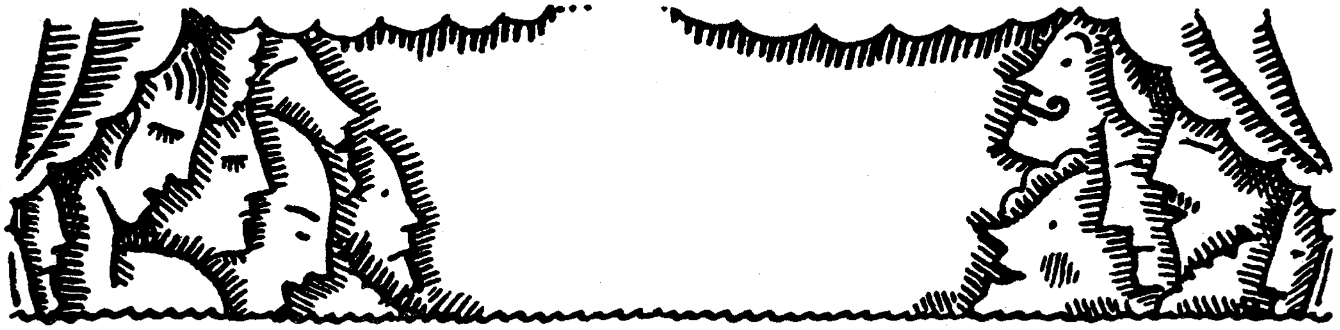

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

BY JEEVES
P. G. Wodehouse's manservant has been musicalized by Alan Ayckbourn (book and lyrics) and Andrew Lloyd Webber (score). Mr. Ayckbourn is the director. Previews begin Oct. 17. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

EVERETT BEEKIN
Bebe Neuwirth and Robin Bartlett lead the cast in Richard Greenberg's new play, which traces the history of a Jewish family through four generations, from New York to California. Previews begin Oct. 19. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

EVERYTHING THAT RISES MUST CONVERGE
New York Theatre Workshop presents a staging by Karin Coonrod of three stories by Flannery O'Connor. Previews begin Oct. 17. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 239-6200.)

45 SECONDS FROM BROADWAY
Neil Simon's new comedy is set in the Edison Hotel coffee shop, a hangout for theatre types. Directed by Jerry Zaks. In previews. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

HAVANA IS WAITING
In Eduardo Machado's new drama, a Cuban-American man returns to Havana after being sent to Miami as a child in 1961. In previews. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

LIGHT YEARS
A new comedy by Billy Aronson, about four college roommates. In previews through Oct. 20. Opens Oct. 21 at 7:30. (Theatre Three, 311 W. 43rd St. 279-4200.)

MAMMA MIA!
Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus's musical, set on a mythical Greek island, employs the songs of their defunct rock band, Abba. Preview on Oct. 17. Opens Oct. 18 at 6:30. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 563-5544.)

NOISES OFF
Patti LuPone and Peter Gallagher lead the cast in a revised version of Michael Frayn's 1982 backstage comedy. Jeremy Sams is the director. In previews. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

SEXAHOLIX
John Leguizamo's new solo show. In previews. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

SHINY HOT NIGHTS:
MORE SONGS OF JONI MITCHELL
The performance artist John Kelly stars in a follow-up to his 1997 one-man paean to the singer. In previews. (Fez, 380 Lafayette St. 533-2680.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			17	18	19	20
21	22	23				

THE SQUARE
The Ma-Yi Theatre presents sixteen short plays examining the Asian-American experience, by playwrights including Ping Chong, Constance Congdon, Kia Corthron, David Henry Hwang, Craig Lucas, Mac Wellman, and Chay Yew. Lisa Peterson is the director. In previews. (Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

THE THEFT OF SITA
Nigel Jamieson's music-theatre interpretation of the Ramayana incorporates shadow puppetry by the Indonesian artist I Made Sidia and a jazz-influenced gamelan score by the Australian composer Paul Grabowsky. Oct. 17 and Oct. 19-20 at 7:30 and Oct. 21 at 3. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

THOU SHALT NOT
Susan Stroman is the director of a new musical, based on Zola's "Thérèse Raquin" and set in New Orleans after the Second World War, with a score by Harry Connick, Jr., and a book by David Thompson. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE WOMEN
Scott Elliott directs a cast that includes Kristen Johnston, Rue McClanahan, Cynthia Nixon, Jennifer Tilly, Mary Louise Wilson, and Jennifer Coolidge, in Clare Boothe Luce's 1936 satire. With costumes by Isaac Mizrahi. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

WONDER OF THE WORLD
Sarah Jessica Parker portrays a runaway housewife with a disturbed husband, in a new dark comedy by David Lindsay-Abaire. Christopher Ashley is the director. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AN ADULT EVENING OF SHEL SILVERSTEIN
The Atlantic Theatre Company opens the season with ten one-acts by the writer-cartoonist-composer-lyricist. In previews. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

BLOODY POETRY
Howard Brenton's 1984 drama about the relationship between Byron and Shelley. (Connelly Theatre, 220 E. 4th St. 206-1515. Closes Oct. 28.)

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)
A revival of Adam Long, Daniel Singer, and Jess Winfield's comedy, in which three actors (Peter Ackerman, Jeremy Shamos, and David Turner) perform thirty-seven plays and a hundred and fifty-four sonnets in under two hours. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD
AND OTHER BUSINESS
Arthur Miller's 1972 interpretation of the Book of Genesis, staged by Stari Repertory Theatre. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 870-6784. Closes Nov. 4.)

DANCE OF DEATH
Ian McKellen and Helen Mirren portray Strindberg's tortured husband and wife in a new adaptation written by Richard Greenberg and directed by Sean Mathias. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

EXIT THE KING
Perhaps it's more profound in French. This translation of Eugène Ionesco's famous meditation on how death makes one see the value of life, and on how each person is his own universe, just skims the surface of those near-clichés. And there's very little of Ionesco's intricate wordplay. Luckily, the performances by the Pearl Theatre Company almost make up for it. Under Joseph Hardy's direction, Robert Hock, as a dying king, Carol Schultz and Celeste Ciulla as his queens, and Ray Virta as a doctor and sometime executioner, perform with agility and deadpan wit, and they make wonderful use of their bodies—watching Ms. Ciulla suddenly get stuck to her chair, for example, is a delight. Michael Nichols and Sue Jin Song ably fill out the cast. (80 St. Mark's Pl. 598-9802. Closes Oct. 21.)

HEDDA GABLER
Kate Burton has the title role in Ibsen's 1890 play, directed by Nicholas Martin. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

IBSEN SERIES
The Century Center's five-year festival continues with "Hedda Gabler." (111 E. 15th St. 982-6782.)

AN IMMACULATE MISCONCEPTION
A drama by Carl Djerassi, better known as the inventor of the birth-control pill, about sex in the age of fertility treatments. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes Oct. 21.)

IN ON IT
You might think that the last thing New Yorkers need right now is a reminder that things over which we have no control will always happen. But Daniel MacIvor's new play is both bracing and, in the end, comforting. It tells the story of a man who's always been waiting for Something to happen, how he and his family react when a series of painful events do unfold, and how we try to explain to ourselves what

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has occurred. Thanks to dynamic and engaging performances by Mr. MacIvor and Darren O'Donnell, the evening is never dreary. Pockets of love and warmth and silliness and even regret serve as reminders that Something is always happening in our lives—often something good if we're paying attention. This show isn't a cure-all, but it's a way of reëngaging with the rest of the world and the theatre at the same time, and Mr. MacIvor should be congratulated for continuing to perform it now. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. 477-5288. Closes Oct. 21.)

THE LATE HENRY MOSS
Welcome back to Sam Shepard land, that now familiar slice of the American Southwest where the psychological outlook is as bleak as the terrain. A pair of estranged brothers (Ethan Hawke and Arliss Howard) show up at their abusive, alcoholic father's broken-down house to bury him. First, though, they bully the hell out of each other while trying to piece together their father's pathetic final days as well as the final days in their life as a family. The show has been pared down by half an hour since it débuted at San Francisco's Magic Theatre, and the cast has been deglittered (it starred Sean Penn, Nick Nolte, Woody Harrelson, James Gammon, and Cheech Marin), but it still drags on too long and lacks the thrilling flinch-inducing impact of Shepard's earlier, less diffuse plays. Hawke, the only real Hollywood type, blends in nicely with the legits, and his childlike face actually lends menace to his character. Talented as they are, however, Howard could never be Hawke's older brother, and Guy Boyd is too much of a cartoon bear in his portrayal of their father, who appears more befuddled than frightening in drunken-stupor flashbacks. The supporting cast members (Clark Middleton, Jose Perez, and Sheila Tousey) are excellent. Joseph Chaikin is the director. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529. Closes Nov. 4.)

THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT
Anne Jackson has the title role and Kim Hunter portrays her friend Mlle. Gabrielle in Jean Giraudoux's 1945 comic fable, in which a group of eccentric women foil an evil plot to destroy Paris. (Neighborhood Playhouse, 340 E. 54th St. 308-6866. Closes Oct. 28.)

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO
Beaumarchais's 1784 play opens the Target Margin Theatre's season. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 358-3657.)

METAMORPHOSES
Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of the series of myths by Ovid is set in and around a twenty-seven-foot onstage pool. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
It's gimmick Shakespeare, and it really works. The accomplished Aquila Theatre Company has set the Bard's comic examination of trust, mistrust, and sharp-tongued singles destined for couplehood in London in an "Avengers"-influenced Swinging Sixties. The men wear bowlers and sharp Savile Row suits, the women are smart and slinky in black vinyl. The story is advanced with the help of some go-go choreography, and "Hey Nonny Nonny" sung to a bossa-nova beat is just plain cool. What is not at all tricked up is the language, which is beautifully spoken, dramatically revealing, and crystalline in effect. (Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 239-6200.)

OEDIPUS REX
Sophocles' tragedy, in condensed form, from the Metropolitan Playhouse. (220 E. 4th St. 995-5302.)

PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS
David Friend and Simon Morley bring their "genital origami" from the West End to New York by way of Australia, where the show originated in 1996. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

RAVE MOM
In her latest work, the performance artist Ann Magnuson examines Ecstasy, aging, and Silicon Alley. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. at 9th St. 477-5288.)

REBEL WITHOUT A PAUSE
The performance artist Reno, in her latest show. Continues through Oct. 21. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

REEFER MADNESS
The 1936 film about the evils of weed has been turned into a musical by Kevin Murphy (lyrics and book) and Dan Studney (music and book). With choreography by Paula Abdul. Andy Fickman is the director. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

RUDE ENTERTAINMENT
Three one-acts by Paul Rudnick ("Mr. Charles, Currently of Palm Beach," "Very Special Needs," and "On the Fence"). (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 239-6200.)

SAVE IT FOR THE STAGE: THE LIFE OF REILLY
Charles Nelson Reilly performs an autobiographical one-man show, which he co-wrote with Paul Linke. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

THE SHAPE OF THINGS
Gretchen Mol, Paul Rudd, Rachel Weisz, and Frederick Weller are in the cast of the Almeida Theatre Company staging of Neil LaBute's latest play. Mr. LaBute is the director. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

TICK, TICK . . . BOOM!
The title represents the late author Jonathan Larson's fear of time running out on his musical dreams. The show is set on the eve of the composer's thirtieth birthday—his Walpurgisnacht—as he is caught between the pressures to succeed and to settle. The slick, hardworking cast of three is well directed by Scott Schwartz, and, with Larson's plotline deftly reworked by David Auburn, the production has a fetching modesty and reveals Larson's idiosyncrasy, energy, and promise. (7/9/01) (Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

UNWRAP YOUR CANDY
From Doug Wright ("Quills") a quartet of dark comedies about parenthood, childhood, secrets, and theatregoing. Leslie Lyles, Reg Rogers, Henry Stram, Michi Barall, and Darren Pettie are in the cast. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303.)

URINETOWN
The amount of fun to be had at this musical, by Greg Kotis (book and lyrics) and Mark Hollmann (music and lyrics), is in direct proportion to the unpleasantness of the title. Its central idea is that an evil corporation controls all the toilets in a city that bears some resemblance to New York, but you don't have to rack your brains about the ramifications of that any more than the authors did; the show is really no more and no less than a terrifically spirited sendup of musicals and their conventions, as self-conscious and gag-happy as a Warner Bros. cartoon (not only does a sign saying "Secret Hideout" hang above a secret hideout, the sign has an arrow on it). John Cullum, Jeff McCarthy, Nancy Opel, and Spencer Kayden lead the uniformly wonderful cast, which is under the direction of John Rando, and John Carraga is responsible for the clever musical staging. (10/1/01) (Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

CONTACT
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

THE FANTASTICKS
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 2001: A SPOOF ODYSSEY
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

THE FULL MONTY
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.

"The Shape of Things," Neil LaBute's latest play, at the Promenade.

HIROSHI TANABE

KISS ME, KATE
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

LOVE, JANIS
Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.

LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE MUSIC MAN
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.

PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.

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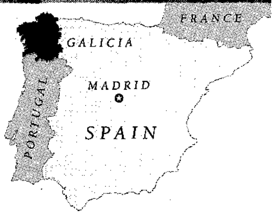

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THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
PROOF
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.
RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.
STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.
THE SYRINGA TREE
Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.
THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.
THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

The San Francisco band Captured! By Robots performs at Luxx this week.

DANCE

PARSONS DANCE COMPANY
The ten-member troupe premières "Kind of Blue," Parsons' tribute to Miles Davis. The two programs in the two-week engagement also include new works by former Parsons dancer Robert Battle. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 16 at 7:30, Oct. 17-19 at 8, Oct. 20 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 21 at 2 and 7:30.)

LAR LUBOVITCH DANCE COMPANY
Lubovitch usually creates plotless dances streaming with clear, seemingly boneless motion, but lately he's also wanted to find a way to depict "the beliefs and rituals that hold sway in us." His most recent work, a duet for the American Ballet Theatre soloists Marcelo Gomes and Sandra Brown, was inspired by "My Funny Valentine," a tune that he says is part of our collective subconscious. And for "Men's Stories," the raw, revealing work he made last year for the nine men in the company, he took "a very powerful, masculine Beethoven concerto and ripped it open so that other music spills out," he says. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Oct. 17-20 at 8.)

"DRUMMING"
Steve Reich's 1971 "Drumming"—performed live by the Brussels-based percussion ensemble Ictus—constructs a sublime architecture of stampeding drums, seraphic voices, and what sound like hundreds of tiny, shimmering bells. Anna Teresa De Keersmaeker's dance is the music's more human counterpoint. The twelve dancers take a rangy two-minute pattern of carefree skips, slashing arms, froggy hops, and imploding torsos and subject it to permutations and combinations that are full of air and light. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Oct. 16 and Oct. 18-20 at 7:30.)

KEVIN WYNN COLLECTION
The choreographer joins forces with composer Philip Hamilton, who contributes a live score, for the full-length work "Carry Me Like Water Reflecting Skin," a consciously hallucinogenic look at an extended family. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Oct. 18-21 at 8:30.)

"PALACE AND PARLOUR"
The choreographers Lynn Parkerson and Julia K. Gleich share a program of new ballets: each contributes larger group works (for the palace) and smaller, more intimate works (for the parlour). (The Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. 289-3725. Oct. 18-20 at 8 and Oct. 21 at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

BETA BAND
Thanks in part to a cameo of sorts in the movie "High Fidelity" (they're the band whose record John Cusack plays in his shop, prompting a rush of customers) and a recent tour opening for Radiohead, the latest release by this endearingly inventive United Kingdom foursome, "Hot Shots II," managed to make the charts. Not bad for a bunch whose eclecticism makes Beck's album "Odelay" sound like a simple pop record. (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. 921-1940. Oct. 18 at 8.)

BURNING SPEAR
Winston Rodney has been one of reggae's prime Rasta prophets for more than twenty-five years. His mid-seventies masterworks, "Marcus Garvey" and "Dry and Heavy," preached the importance of self-knowledge and positive thinking punctuated by insistent, insinuating grooves. Though his later work has been uneven, 1999's "Calling Rastafari" earned him a Grammy Award, critical acclaim, and a renewed sense of passion. And his concerts are always excellent. (Roxy, 515 W. 18th St. 307-7171. Oct. 18 at 9.)

OBO ADDY
The Ghanaian native and master drummer Addy and his four-piece Okropong ensemble offer intricate rhythms, West African dancing, and call-and-response catharsis. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Oct. 19 at 7 and Oct. 20 at 3 and 7.)

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
Overshadowed by giants during the fifties and sixties while he was realizing some of his most significant work as a saxophonist, composer, and arranger, **Jimmy Heath** is finally a recognized member of the canon. At seventy-five, he still sounds as poised and inspired as ever. Celebrating this landmark birthday with the "Little Giant" are **Wynton Marsalis** and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, the trombonist **Slide Hampton**, and Heath's excessively gifted brothers: the bassist **Percy** and the drummer **Albert.** (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Oct. 19-20 at 8.)

ROBERT CRAY
Cray began the eighties as blues music's rising young star and ended the nineties as one of soul music's best-kept secrets; while his Memphis grooves and supple vocals sometimes stray too close to Al Green's territory, he continues to turn out fine albums. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 20 at 8.)

MABEL MERCER CABARET CONVENTION
The twelfth annual gathering of vocalists gets under way on Oct. 22 with a concert by Karen Akers, Andrea Marcovicci, Malcolm Gets, Karen Mason, and others. The following night's program is titled "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square," and it features Heather Gilchriest, John Scherer, and Larry Woodard, along with special guest Judy Campbell, who first sang "Nightingale" in London during the Second World War. (Town Hall. All shows at 6. The convention runs through Oct. 28.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
243 W. 42nd St. (997-4144)—Oct. 18-19: One of the greatest soul and blues singers, **Bobby (Blue) Bland** is almost always on tour, usually opening for his friend B. B. King. Here he'll have a chance to settle in and enjoy displaying his signature growl—a rumbling call that sounds to the uninitiated like someone clearing his throat but has the unequivocal effect of driving the ladies crazy.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Oct. 19: **Low.** The sweet vocals of the married couple Mimi Parker and Alan Sparhawk lead this Duluth trio's dreamy meditations. Oct. 21-24: **David Byrne.** The big suit may be forever consigned to the closet, but Byrne, who's been performing relentlessly since the release of his latest album this past spring, the accomplished and witty "Look Into the Eyeball," still knows how to please the crowd with the odd song from his days with the Talking Heads.

FEZ
380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Oct. 17: **Mike Viola,** the front man for the Candy Butchers, offers a solo show. Oct. 19: The sisters **Nerissa** and **Katryna Nields** take time off from their eponymous family fivesome for a night out together. Oct. 23: **Rasputina,** a gaggle of corseted female cellists who grind their way through pop tunes.

MARK ULRIKSEN

TABLES FOR TWO

AQ CAFÉ
Scandinavia House, 58 Park Ave. (847-9745)—Although lots of chefs get TV shows or open bistro branches of their restaurants once they hit it big, not many lend their expertise to lunch counters. But that's what Aquavit's Marcus Sammuelsson has done at Scandinavia House, where you can overhear people saying things like "I quit Finnish class because it was interfering with my Icelandic" while viewing an exhibition of avant-garde snowshoe art.

The cool zinc-and-spruce façade of the modernist building is echoed by a wall of horizontal slats inside, where the Nordic design is typically understated. With the smart little chairs in primary colors and food wrapped in plastic at the counter, the place is a bit like the cafeteria at Ikea, without the stressed-out families bickering over Ivar shelving units; the tall, good-looking, and almost entirely blond crowd is serene. Sammuelsson is known at Aquavit for his inspired creations involving obscure North Atlantic seafood. His gift to midtown lunchtime is AQ's smorgasbord, which showcases lox, gravlax, and four kinds of herring—pickled, tomato spiked, mustard drenched, and curried, the latter described by a Minnesotan as "extreme herring." The potato-scallion soup is perfect for sopping giant slabs of bumpy Knäcke flatbread, and Icelandic mussel soup comes loaded with saffron and fragrant turnips.

Scandinavians like their sandwiches open-faced, which must be the reason for the frustrating gravlax pizza: focaccia with avocado and a broad slab of cured salmon. The flavors in each squishy bite work well together, but it's piled so high that it takes some deft maneuvering to eat. There's a selection of forgettable salads and wraps, but the Swedish meatballs with mashed potatoes and lingonberries is a de-luxe version of Ikea's famous lunch special. Lunch places only really need one outstanding dish to be great, and here it's salmon lasagna—surprisingly light, and with plenty of dill-pesto sauce.

With any luck, this trend of humble expansions by star chefs will catch on—maybe Alain Ducasse could do something with a street cart? (Open Mondays through Saturdays. Entrées $7-$10.)

—*Owen Phillips*

Sharing the bill is **Eleni Mandell.** A visit from the Los Angeles singer-songwriter Mandell is a real treat. Perhaps the best unsigned singer-songwriter in the business, Mandell was weaned on artists like Tom Waits and X, and her dark and sexy songs have been compared to those of everyone from Chan Marshall to Patsy Cline. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Oct. 21: **Ian Hunter,** the charismatic former lead singer of the great seventies glam rockers Mott the Hoople, may not have reached the commercial success of peers like David Bowie and Queen, but his cynical, self-effacing, regular-Joe lyrical style figured prominently in the gestation of British punk rock that followed his years with Mott. And his recent solo work hasn't been any less powerful. "Rant" is one of the most satisfying collections of the year.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Oct. 21: **Cursive.** It's rare to feel good about an indie-rock band that starts its latest EP with an exegesis on its musical style and marketing strategy, but this Omaha-based outfit's heavy rhythm section and driving approach easily keep it out of the sinkholes of excessive introspection.

LUXX
256 Grand St., Williamsburg (718-599-1000)—Oct. 17: **Captured! By Robots,** a very odd one-man, multi-cyborg band from San Francisco. The one man goes by the name JBOT, and he built his fellow band members, GTRBOT666 and DRMBOT0110, because, he says, he couldn't get along with other people. Unfortunately, the robots got the better of him and installed a biocerebral chip in JBOT's brain, and now he is their slave, or so the story goes. Onstage the robots humiliate their human band member, and the resulting music is a grinding metal-influenced onslaught of sophomoric references and rock and roll. In other words, devilish fun.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Oct. 20: **Hot Socky,** an amusing new band led by the former Thin Lizard Dawn singer Greg Lattimer. With **Shelby,** the downtown New York City power trio featuring Kenny Cummings on guitar and vocals, who crank out snappy pop songs that address such timeless subjects as lost love, desire, and the whereabouts of Loudon Wainwright.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Oct. 20: **Big Lazy,** the elegantly gritty instrumental trio led by the extraordinary guitarist Stephen Ulrich, offers a midnight show.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

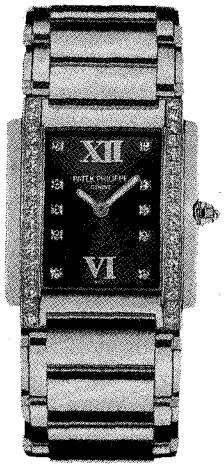
BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—**Andy Summers,** the former guitarist for the Police, has been indulging his jazz jones over the past few years, releasing fusionesque albums that celebrate the work of Charles Mingus and Thelonious Monk. His Super Trio band (here Oct. 17-20) features the drummer **Dennis Chambers** and the bassist **Darryl Jones,** who's played with Miles Davis and Summers's old bandmate Sting. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Oct. 21: The spirit of unadulterated bebop—as personified by the sorely missed trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie—lives on in the **Dizzy Gillespie Alumni All-Stars** ensemble, which joins illustrious veterans from various Gillespie bands including the saxophonist **James Moody,** the trombonist **Slide Hampton,** and the trumpeter **Jon Faddis.** The saxophonist **Paquito D'Rivera** is the guest through Thursday, and **Jackie McLean** rounds out the week. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and the magisterially puckish **Bobby Short.** Mondays belong to **Woody Allen and the Eddie Davis New Orleans Jazz Band.** ♦ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **Barbara Carroll** is in attendance.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through Oct. 21: The gentlest, most affecting jazz recording of the year belongs to the bassist **Charlie Haden,** who, in collaboration with the pianist **Gonzalo Rubalcaba,** saluted the lyrical pop ballads of Cuba and Mexico with their release "Nocturne." The other key members of the project join Haden and Rubalcaba for this special engagement: the saxophonist **Joe Lovano,** the drummer **Ingacio Berroa,** and the violinist **Frederico Britos Ruiz.** Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Oct. 21: The **David Sánchez** quintet. This young saxophonist draws inspiration from two fertile sources: the jazz tradition and the indigenous music of his native Puerto Rico. His fusion of the two has lately matured into rhythmically entrancing and highly elegant music. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.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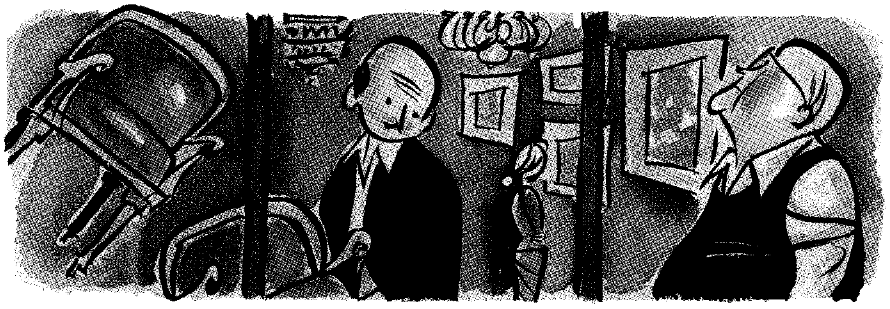
ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

Going Downtown

"For a lot of people, the further south they go, the more real it gets," says Paul Donzella, gazing out the window of **DONZELLA** (17 White St.; 965-8919), a vast repository of mid-century modern furniture a few blocks below Canal Street, where the air still smells of smoke and National Guardsmen are on patrol. "In the first week after the attacks, there were semis parked right outside the store carrying smoldering, squashed trucks." Lately, the city has eased restrictions in the neighborhood, allowing the people Donzella depends on—not just customers, but restorers and upholsterers—easier access to his shop. "We try to make the merchandise look like it did in the showroom, when it was brand new," he says, pointing out a nineteen-thirties dressing table, the former property of Gwendolyn Cafritz, an estimable Washington hostess, that has been returned by master craftsmen to a lustre worthy of a Lubitsch set. Designed by Eugene Schoen, it's made of quilted mahogany and cream lacquered wood and boasts a pair of curved columnar cabinets (one tall, one stubby) and a mirror whose corners are alternately curved and squared. The vanity is a model of restraint next to a circa-1952 sideboard that has doors covered with undulating enamel flowers ($9,600). Does Donzella actually like this item? He looks a little hurt when the question is posed. "I love everything in my store," he says.



MARCELLUS HALL

Two blocks from Chambers Street, the women who work at **SHACK, INC.** (137 West Broadway; 646-226-1892) have hung a huge if tattered vintage flag from the store's balcony. "We were petrified to come back," Alison Thompson says. "I came that first Friday, past all the police checkpoints. When I finally got inside there wasn't even a speck of dust. But we still don't have phone service. We called all our ladies on the cell and said, 'Come shop, we're open!' " A similar resourcefulness is reflected not just in the merchandise—such as a line of frocks that includes a black silk dress whose stiff ruffles depend on hidden wires ($544)—but in the store's design. Silver tarps have been pressed into service as curtains, draping the cast-iron exterior; inside, the walls are decorated with architectural artifacts nailed to gray WonderBoard. The cash-register table, recovered from a Greenpoint pier, feels sticky to the touch. "Beeswax," the salesperson says. "We covered it."

Just west of Shack, at **LILI MARLEEN** (171 Duane St.; 219-0006), the phone is on, but there's plenty of dust. "Antique furniture is so sensitive to how you touch it," says Guido Maus, the shop's co-owner, describing the daunting task of removing ash from seventeenth-century Flemish cupboards and Russian neoclassical birchwood display cabinets and brass repoussé Art Deco mirrors. Of the shop's eclecticism, he says simply, "We are Belgian, European, so we have a less strict approach. We grew up with four or five centuries of furniture all around us." Despite the impressive provenances of the items, the shop takes a lighthearted approach: strung up in the window like tumbling blocks is a group of Louis XVI armchairs that have been re-covered in a startling orange cotton velvet. They're part of a set of twelve that includes a matching settee, something that makes them exceedingly rare and exceedingly expensive ($140,000 for the chairs and settee). "It's fantastic to find a set so complete after two hundred and twenty years," says Maus, "what with fires and wars and all."

—*Lynn Yaeger*

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Drawings and Prints."** Long perusal of this show will install the genius of the sixteenth-century Netherlander in your mind like mystery software. Fifty of Bruegel's sixty-one known drawings, many of them paired with the engravings (by other talented hands) for which they were designs, range from acutely poetic landscapes to surreal fantasies that were influenced by Hieronymous Bosch. Bruegel's teeming incarnations of vice and folly are every bit as wild and cruel as Bosch's, but funnier. (A monkey pulling down the pants of a sleeping man holds its nose: "Phew!") While taking the dimmest possible views of human character, he embraced raw human energy with a zest that feels all-forgiving. His landscapes comprehend the grandeur and the scraggliness of nature in equal measure. The show offers a vivid crash course in connoisseurship, documenting recent scholarly successes at carving the echt Bruegel from a mass of longstanding misattributions. Discovered amid the castoffs are two wonderful anonymous artists—dubbed the Master of the Mountain Landscapes and the Master of the Small Landscapes—who merit fan clubs of their own. Through Dec. 2. ♦ For **"Caspar David Friedrich: Moonwatchers,"** the Met presents seventeen paintings and two works on paper, many of which ("Two Men Contemplating the Moon," "Man and Woman Contemplating the Moon," etc.) capture the German artist at his most Romantic. Through Nov. 11. ♦ **"Along the Nile: Early Photographs of Egypt"** documents nineteenth-century Egypt—the pyramids of Giza, the temples of Karnak, Luxor, and Abu Simbel—in forty-three well-preserved prints from the eighteen-forties and fifties. Through Dec. 30. ♦ **"Paul Signac 1863-1935: Master Neo-Impressionist."** Through Dec. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—An exhibition devoted to Alberto Giacometti includes forty paintings, sixty drawings, and ninety sculptures, including works done before he discovered his signature attenuated style. Through Jan. 8. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—**"Brazil: Body and Soul"** looks at that country's artistic, cultural, and religious traditions, with representative artifacts of every era from the Age of Exploration on, with a focus on Baroque and twentieth-century works. Opens Oct. 19. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—For this site-specific installation, Arturo Herrera has painted the museum's windows with vertical channels of crimson, as if dangling a ribbon from Snow White's hair. The mural also evokes color-field painting—the fluid veils of Morris Louis solidified or the hard-edged forms of Ellsworth Kelly softened and compressed. Through Dec. 9. ♦ **"Sharon Harper: Photographs from the Floating World"** includes black-and-white images of rural scenes taken from a high-speed train, as well as images of clouds in metallic tones. The exhibition inaugurates the Whitney's "First Exposure" series, dedicated to the museum débuts of young photographers. Through Jan. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—**"Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion"** shows the rituals, prayers, customs, and festivals of Hinduism in more than seventy-five photographs, talismans, and video portraits. Accompanied by **"Meeting God,"** an exhibition of photographs of office shrines, taken around New York. Through Feb. 24. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

GROLIER CLUB

47 E. 60th St. (838-6690)—**"Numismatics in the Age of Grolier."** The club's namesake, who generously stamped his ornate bound volumes "Io. Grolierii et Amicorum" ("Property of Jean Grolier and His Friends"), is remembered primarily for his library, but he also had a large collection of coins. That passion developed during an age when numismatics was evolving fast—Grolier's contemporaries Guillaume Budé and Andrea Fulvio published the first books on the subject in 1514, 1517, and 1520. Those books are all here, along with the objects of their obsession, beautiful staters decorated with wheat and boats by engravers working for Nero and Cunobelinus (the model for Shakespeare's Cymbeline); plenty of traditional portrait coins; and a selection of Renaissance portrait medals based on them, which seem a bit crass in comparison—they're about twenty times the size and weight of their models. Through Nov. 17. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—Joe Brainard moved to New York from Oklahoma in 1960 and enjoyed moderate success until 1979, when he abruptly stopped making art for public exhibition (he died of AIDS in 1994). Though best known for reincarnating the cartoon character Nancy in a series of guises from art history ("If Nancy Was a Painting by de Kooning") to medicine ("If Nancy Was Bright's Disease") to philately ("If Nancy Was a Four-Cent Postage Stamp"), Brainard never adopted a signature style. The works on view range from a haute-Pop painting of the 7-Up logo to winsome collages of flowers to horror-vacui assemblages of the Madonna. Eclectic and intimate, this exhibition is an antidote to the showmanship and strategy that hold sway over so much art these days. Through Nov. 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

JIM BUTLER

Quirky paintings by a realist with a relish for kitsch. Butler collects junk-store artifacts—an old leather ice skate, Day-Glo plastic toys, a school of taxidermied piranhas—puts them under spotlights, and paints their portraits. The results are uningratiating and sometimes weirdly memorable. Through Oct. 20. (Roger Smith, 501 Lexington Ave., at 47th St. 832-8831.)

ANNE CHU

Lyrical monotypes by an artist best known for her sculptures inspired by Tang-dynasty ceramics and executed with a rough-hewn, Expressionist zeal. Chu's improvisational touch persists here; the ink seems to float on the page like watercolor, thanks in part to the gifts of the printer Maurice Sanchez. The imagery—knights, griffins, castles—reveals itself slowly like shapes appearing to cloud-gazers, so an arc of moss green below a swipe of gray becomes a mountain shrouded under a threatening sky. Through Oct. 20. (Marlborough Graphics, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900.)

WILLEM DE KOONING AND JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

Pace Wildenstein has become the Don King of art galleries: nobody else has the chutzpah to organize matchups like this one, which follows earlier heavyweight spectacles like Rothko/Bonnard and Noguchi/Arp. The pairing itself is no surprise—Chamberlain's crumpling hoods and fenders have long been recognized as a sculptural corollary of Ab-Ex brushstrokes. But the Chamberlains hold up remarkably well next to an octet of de Kooning's greatest masterworks. And above all, the two oeuvres look great together: battered rivulets of steel and linseed oil accompany each other in counterpoint, filling the gallery with an anarchic chamber music. Through Oct. 27. (20 E. 57th St. 421-3292.)

"INTERWOVEN LIVES"

Both scholarly and smutty, this fascinating show documents a circle of artists with classicist, homoerotic tastes—Mapplethorpians *avant la lettre*. At their center was George Platt Lynes (1907-55), a photographer who worked for *Vogue* while making unexhibitably racy images in his off-hours. Lynes's friends and lovers are represented here in various seemly and unseemly guises, as well as in the form of their own photographs, paintings, and drawings. Among the most compelling are works by Paul Cadmus, Jared French, and the Russian émigré Pavel Tchelitchev, whose career, judging by the stunning surrealist nudes shown here, cries out for reassessment. Through Oct. 20. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111.)

Short List

BRUCE MC CALL

James Goodman, 41 E. 57th St. 593-3737.
Through Oct. 30.

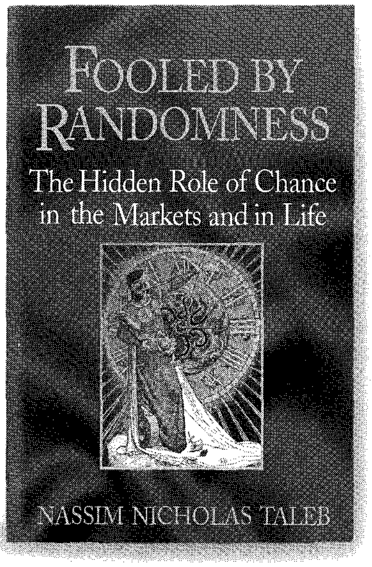
GERHARD RICHTER

Marion Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160.
Through Oct. 27.

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

CLARINA BEZZOLA

Bezzola, who once trained as a jeweller's apprentice, has always loved to sew and sing; she assembled this collection partly to serve as costumes for her own performances. She recently sang a "Lamentation" while wearing an outfit of the same name: a padded brocade suit with matching slippers and ten-foot



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TEXERE

breast extensions in a cloth that bears a prosciutto pattern. The extensions trail behind, pulling a heavy system of hoses and rollers, like a fashionable street sweeper. Most of the unwieldy outfits here are similarly comical and designed to mess with the emotions. "Tenderness Shield," a thick, mufflike satin neck brace, prevents closeness, while the "Connector Suits" force several wearers to hold hands. Through Oct. 20. (Broan, 423 W. 14th St. 633-6525.)

JOHN DE FAZIO

The centerpiece of this small but over-the-top show is a collection of twelve water pipes, each apparently inspired by a sign of the zodiac (hence the show's title, "Starbong"), with cultural allusions that ricochet from Joe Camel to J.F.K. On the walls, a series of cartoonish drawings in a psychedelic palette equate gambling traits with astrological signs (Scorpio is to craps as Capricorn is to blackjack). A painting with a similar theme looms overhead like a Sistine Chapel for the slot-machine set. Through Oct. 20. (Urbach, 526 W. 26th St. 627-0974.)

"FROM GODDESS TO PIN-UP: ICONS OF FEMININITY IN INDIAN CALENDAR ART"

With all the giddy dazzle of a Bollywood movie comes this show of more than eighty examples of calendar art, the majority printed in northern India over the last forty years. The images are organized into categories whose straitlaced titles—"Woman Commoditized" or "The Unity of Opposites"—belie the garish Technicolor antics of the pinups themselves. Fans of farm girls may get a kick out of midriff-baring Miss Fertility 1975, who perches next to a couple of sacks of fertilizer while daintily brandishing a sickle. Other imagery is derived from the Hindu pantheon, such as a four-armed Lakshmi posed alluringly against a backdrop of oil derricks. Through Jan. 19. (IndoCenter of Art and Culture, 530 W. 25th St. 462-4221.)

Short List

FRANCIS CAPE

Murray Guy, 453 W. 17th St. 463-7372.
Through Oct. 27.

RODNEY GRAHAM

303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.
Through Nov. 3.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

CARROLL DUNHAM

The master of "kid id" offers an amazingly repetitive assortment of drawings. All feature his signature phallic puppet, a sort of X-rated version of Mr. Potato Head. And all are drawn with a rash, blotchy line that seems perfectly suited to his ill-behaved aesthetic. If you like Dunham (his fellow baby boomers almost invariably do), it's because his work feels so egregiously infantile: he's made a career out of channelling his inner brat. Through Oct. 27. (Nolan Eckman, 560 Broadway. 925-6190.)

CATHERINE MURPHY

One of our most distinguished realist painters, Murphy continues her perverse pursuit of subjects that seem better suited to photography. In this show, they include her own palm, a page of a crumpled diary, a stained tablecloth, and the interior of a paper bag. All are seen close up and are rendered with an exacting, radiant probity. Murphy's eye never skims, but neither does it play favorites, and the result is a kind of eerie evenness that feels utterly contemporary, even when the subjects don't quite yield up their private significance. Through Nov. 3. (Lennon Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012.)

REBECCA PURDUM

Purdum's canvases are typically fogs of color—gauzy surfaces swarming with rich, closely calibrated hues. Here, in an unusually ascetic mood, she restricts herself to blacks, whites, and glowing mauves. The results are super somber, like a cellar in the Rothko chapel, and they suit this season's heightened earnestness. In one particularly beautiful painting, "Rainbow," faint curving striations in shades of gray suggest a rainbow as seen by the color blind. Through Oct. 27. (Tilton/Kustera, 49 Greene St. 941-1775.)

"SPUNKY"

Just inside the door at this group show, Philip Rantzer has parked a bicycle. At least, it used to be a bicycle: now it's a portable city with piles of crates painted as tenements. The image is meant to refer to the Jewish diaspora, but it also fits Rantzer's creative community, the twenty-five artists who have trundled into lower Manhattan with their works. Many of these fellow-travellers, selected through Exit Art's ongoing slide-review and studio-visit programs, have produced charismatic and smart work—especially Yongkyoung Kim, Ryan McGinness, Blake Sandberg, Hyungsub Shin, and Kimberly Hart. Children will be particularly pleased with Shin's chrome millipede made from umbrella ribs and Hart's Seussian "Daffy Patch," a pastel knitted and crocheted forest. Through Oct. 27. (548 Broadway. 966-7745.)

Short List

NICOLA DE MARIA

Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St. 431-3685.
Through Oct. 27.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S

Oct. 17 at 10:15 A.M.: Chinese ceramics, bronzes, paintings, furniture, and other objects. An exceptional *sancai*-glazed ewer from the Tang dynasty, estimated to bring almost a million dollars, is the highlight of the sale, which also includes a generous selection of snuffboxes. ♦ Oct. 18 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Silver, Russian works of art, and objects of virtu, featuring the Huntingdon cistern, a gift from George III to the tenth Earl of Huntingdon, made by Abraham Portal in London in 1762. ♦ Oct. 19 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: English furniture and decorations. A set of twelve giltwood dining chairs from the eighteenth century, formerly in the apartments of Windsor Castle, is a highlight of the sale. ♦ Oct. 22 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: A sale of antique and modern jewelry. ♦ Oct. 23 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Watches and clocks from the seventeenth century to the present. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S

Oct. 17 at 10 A.M. and 2: Art works from India, the Himalayas, and Southeast Asia. A tanka portrait of two Tibetan abbots from the thirteenth century and "La Terre," a richly impastoed abstract painting by the contemporary Indian artist Sayed Haider Raza, are two highlights of the sale. ♦ Oct. 18 at 10 A.M. and 2: English, Irish, and Colonial export furniture. ♦ Oct. 19 at 10 A.M. and 2: Silver, Russian works of art, and objects of virtu. ♦ Oct. 22-23 at 10 A.M. and 2: "Magnificent Jewels." Among the impressive selection of diamonds, colored gemstones, and jewelry—crafted by such houses as Cartier and Boucheron—the sale features "Satine," a diamond necklace designed by Stefano Canturi and worn by Nicole Kidman in "Moulin Rouge," which is expected to bring as much as a million dollars. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

CHRISTIE'S EAST

Oct. 17 at 10 A.M. and 2: A sale of silver. ♦ Oct. 18 at 10 A.M. and 2: Decorative art works from Asia. ♦ Oct. 23 at 10 A.M. and 2: European furniture and decorative arts. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

DOYLE

Oct. 17 at 10 A.M.: English and Continental furniture and decorations, along with a selection of Old Master paintings and a group of Asian art works. Among the highlights of the sale are a Louis XVI gilt-bronze kingwood console *desserte* by Jean-Henri Riesener and a large collection of Chinese export porcelain, circa 1790-95. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

SWANN

Oct. 18 at 10:30 A.M.: Books from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The highlight of the morning sale is a first edition, complete with dust jacket, of Dashiell Hammett's "The Maltese Falcon" (1930), expected to bring as much as eighteen thousand dollars; the session also includes a generous selection of works by Joseph Conrad. ♦ Oct. 18 at 2: Part II of the sale begins with a first edition of "Cup of Gold," John Steinbeck's first novel, and also features works by Kipling, Woolf, and William Carlos Williams. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)

PARK AVENUE ANTIQUES SHOW

One of the season's major shows, featuring a panoramic selection of American and European furniture, paintings, silver, rugs, and much more. (Wallace Hall, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-3588. Oct. 18-21.)

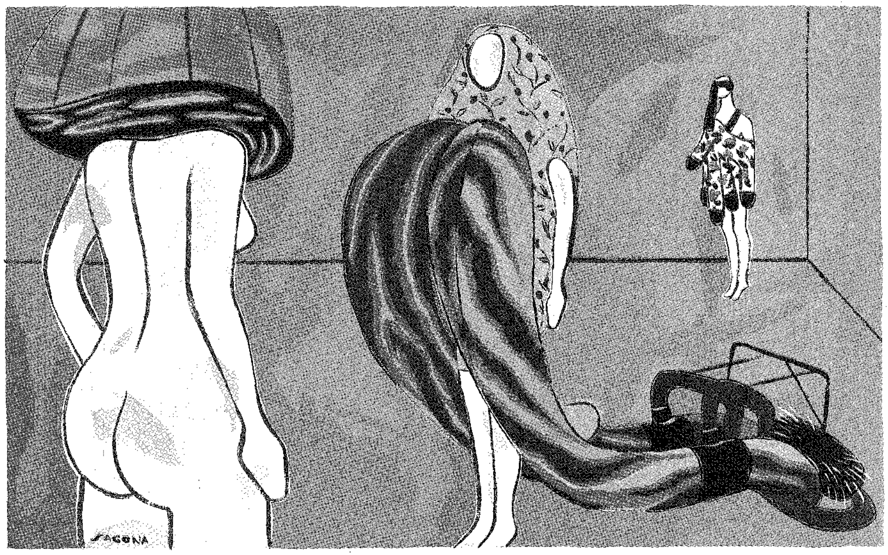
PHOTOGRAPHY

AMY ARBUS

From 1980 to 1991, Arbus had a standing assignment to photograph the denizens of downtown New York for the *Village Voice*. Her straightforward portraiture seems intended to be upstaged by her subjects and their extravagant outfits—big hair, painted leather, animal prints, and heavy jewelry were the order of the day. Celebrity appearances include Susanne Bartsch in a "TitsSuit" with round patch pockets over her breasts, and a pre-famous Madonna in pajamas and a stained vintage overcoat. Through Nov. 14. (Bateman, 560 Broadway. 925-7951.)

HELMUT NEWTON

This small show, timed to coincide with Newton's full-scale retrospective at the International Center of Photography, listed below, offers material similar to the I.C.P.'s in subject if not in texture—nudes in high heels, several women with one breast covered and the other exposed, and celebrities, including a barely clad Raquel Welch, in "In Her Garden, Beverly



Clarina Bezzola's adventurous and wearable sculptures, at Broan.

MARINA SAGONA

Hills" (1981). The work is less imposing in these new and vintage prints, which vary from twelve by sixteen inches to twenty by twenty-four, than it is in the I.C.P.'s mural-size panoramas, but a change of scale can't make it tame or humble. Through Oct. 27. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

HELLEN VAN MEENE
Van Meene's past subjects have been predominantly Dutch; these new portraits document a two-month trip to Japan. Her formula of photographing teen-age girls under natural light confirms that adolescent awkwardness is as universal as one might expect—the new subjects can blow bubble-gum bubbles and hang upside down off the sides of beds with the best of them. Through Oct. 27. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 860-1777—**Helmut Newton** was most recently in the spotlight with the 2000 release of his sixty-six-pound book, "Sumo," which came with its own Philippe Starck table. He's back with this retrospective, curated by his wife. Through Dec. 30. ♦ **"The Construction of the Paris Opera: Photographs of Delmaet and Durandelle"** and **" 'Greed' and Other Recent Acquisitions"** will also be on show through Dec. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

THÉODORE BRAUNER (1914-2000)
Gat, 1100 Madison Ave. 327-0441. Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Both shows through Nov. 3.

VINCENZO CASTELLA / HELEN LEVITT
Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930.
Through Oct. 27.

JOHN COPLANS
Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.
Through Oct. 27.

MICHEL FRANÇOIS
Marcus, 578 Broadway. 226-3200.
Through Oct. 20.

LUIGI GHIRRI / TODD HIDO
Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 627-2410.
Through Oct. 20.

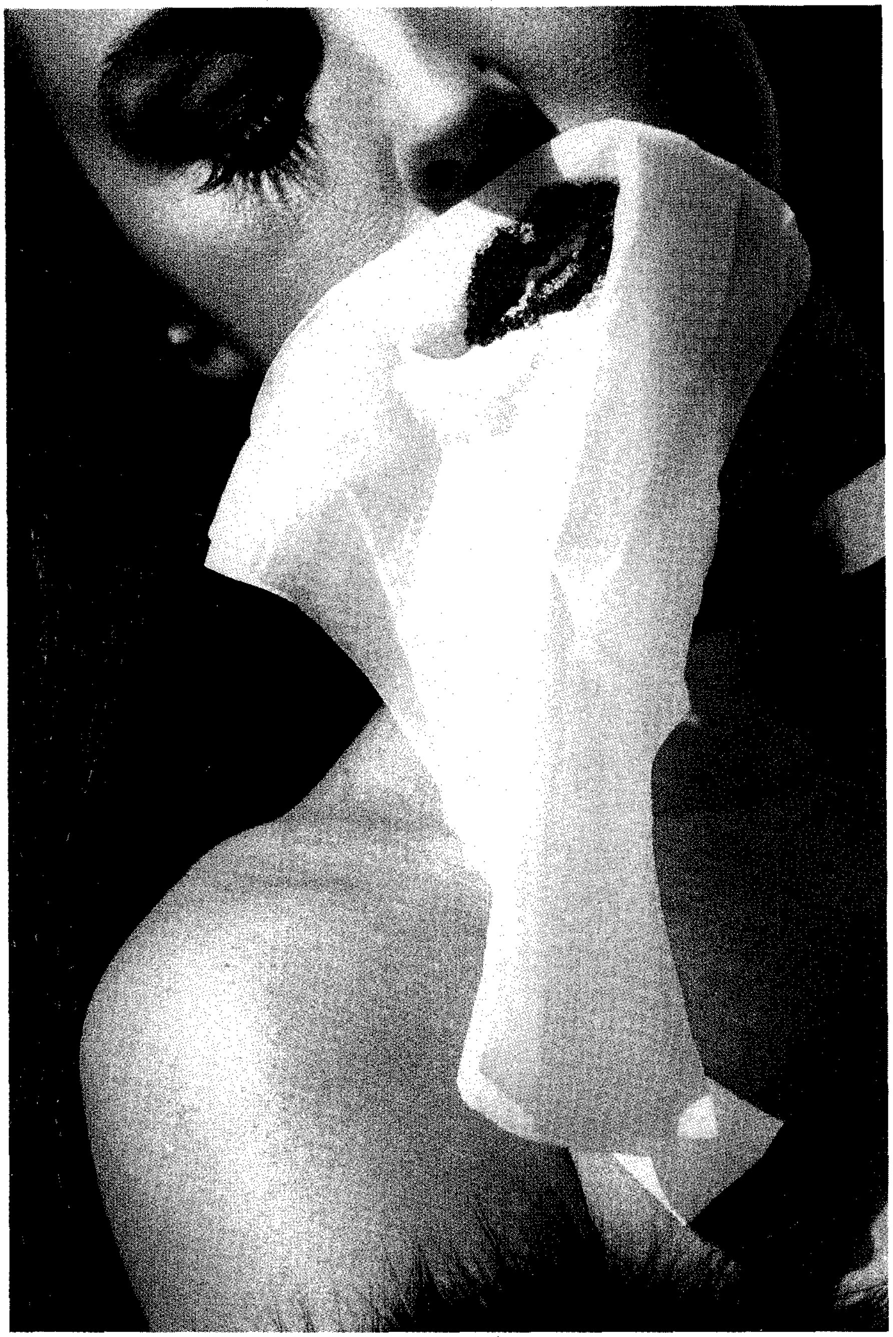
See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the American Museum of Natural History.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
"La Bohème," with Hei-Kyung Hong and Frank Lopardo as Mimi and Rodolfo, and Inva Mula and Bruno Caproni as Musetta and Marcello; the conductor is Carlo Rizzi. (Oct. 17 at 8.) ♦ For the rest of the run, Patricia Racette, Ramón Vargas, and Emily Pulley replace Hong, Lopardo, and Mula. (Oct. 20 at 1:30.) ♦ Mozart's **"Idomeneo,"** featuring Dawn Upshaw, Carol Vaness, Susan Graham, and Plácido Domingo; James Levine. (Oct. 18 and Oct. 22 at 8.) ♦ Jane Eaglen and Dolora Zajick (along with Richard Margison and Hao Jiang Tian) lead the cast in John Copley's new production of **"Norma,"** with sets by John Conklin; Carlo Rizzi. (Oct. 19 at 8 and Oct. 23 at 7:30.) ♦ Robert Carsen's spare and spacious 1997 production of Tchaikovsky's **"Eugene Onegin,"** impeccably costumed in early-nineteenth-century style, echoes the score's clean lines and lack of pretense, and fits well with Vladimir Jurowski's taut and polished account of the score. The cast, which includes Solveig Kringelborn, Katarina Karnéus, Marcello Giordani, Thomas Hampson, and the British bass Robert Lloyd (making a brief but memorable appearance as Prince Gremin), is uniformly eloquent; this is the final performance of the season. (Oct. 20 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Verdi's **"Macbeth,"** a return of the 1997 production, with Richard Paul Fink in the title role and Lauren Flanigan reprising her role as Lady Macbeth. George Manahan conducts. (Oct. 18 and Oct. 23 at 7:30 and Oct. 20 at 1:30.) ♦ James Robertson's fresh and engaging production of **"La Bohème"** returns from last season, with Maria Kanyova, Alexandra Coku, Misha Didyk, and Alfredo Daza; Brent McMunn. (Oct. 19 at 8 and Oct. 21 at 1:30.) ♦ Jonathan Miller's production of **"The Mikado,"** with Jan Opalach (in the title role), Anna Christy, Myrna Paris, Kirstin Chávez, Keith Jameson, and Richard Suart; Gerald Steichen. (Oct. 20 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 307-4100.)



Helmut Newton's shows at Staley-Wise and the I.C.P. include work from 1960 to 2001.

"STRANGE BIRDS"
In his new opera, Joseph Diebes certainly attempts to expand the genre. Instead of acts, there are a hundred "micro-scenes"; the four singers, without benefit of character or plot, intone elliptical strands of melody inspired by birdsongs; and the accompaniment (or "sonic weather") is made from samplings of orchestral recordings (on vinyl, for "the warmth," the composer says). The singers are Galienne Eriksen, Vielka Kelly, Daniel Neer, and John Rose; the visual décor, high-tech manipulations of nineteenth-century imagery, is by Jeff Sugg. (Gale Gates et Al., 37 Main St., at Water St., Brooklyn. 718-522-4597. Oct. 18-21 and Oct. 23 at 8:30. Through Nov. 3.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
The Philharmonic début of Alan Gilbert, an exceptionally versatile and intelligent young American maestro, will also be a homecoming of sorts; the son of two of the orchestra's string players, Gilbert will be conducting many of the same musicians who watched him grow up. Now the chief conductor of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, he brings some Scandinavian music (including Sibelius's "Swan of Tuonela," with the Philharmonic's English horn player Thomas Stacy) back home with him. Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony completes the program. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Oct. 18 and Oct. 20 at 8, Oct. 19 at 11 A.M., and Oct. 23 at 7:30.)

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Daniel Barenboim leads a trio of concerts at Carnegie Hall, offering an unusual opportunity to hear Wagner's operatic scores in an orchestral setting. Oct. 18 at 8: Excerpts from "Götterdämmerung" (featuring the soprano Elizabeth Connell) follow the New York première of Elliott Carter's Cello Concerto. The soloist is Yo-Yo Ma. ♦ Oct. 19 at 8: Another New York première (Isabel Mundry's "Panorama Ciego") precedes Act I of "Die Walküre" (featuring Angela Denoke, Peter Sieffert, and John Tomlinson in the principal roles). ♦ Oct. 20 at 6: A complete performance of "Tristan und Isolde," with Christian Franz and Waltraud Meier in the title roles, John Tomlinson as King Marke, Andreas Schmidt as Kurwenal, and Nadja Michael as Brangäne. ♦ **Note:** On Oct. 17 at 8 at Weill Recital Hall, Elliott Carter participates in an evening of music and conversation, which includes performances of the Sonata for Cello and Piano and the world première of "Steep Steps," for solo clarinet. The musicians include the clarinettist Virgil Blackwell, the pianist Ursula Oppens, and the cellist Joel Krosnick. (247-7800.)

MOSCOW STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Vladimir Feltsman is the piano soloist in Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto, the centerpiece of a program that also includes music by Wagner and Tchaikovsky (the "Pathétique" Symphony). Pavel Kogan conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Oct. 21 at 3.)

RECITALS

ALAN FEINBERG
New music may be the fiery American pianist's usual territory, but this Cooper Union concert finds him exploring the Elizabethan keyboard works of Bull, Gibbons, Byrd, and others. (Great Hall, Third Ave. at 7th St. 279-4200. Oct. 18 at 7:30.)

JANE EAGLEN
The English soprano, in town to sing "Norma" at the Met, joins members of the London Symphony for a chamber program including Schubert's "Shepherd on the Rock." (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 51st St. 378-0248. Oct. 18 at 7:30.)

BARGEMUSIC
Oct. 18-19 at 7:30: The pianist Peter Nagy, the soprano Zsuzsanna Lukin, and others present a program of classical Gypsy music, both bracingly authentic (Bartók's "Village Scenes") and delightfully ersatz (Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsodies" and Brahms's Piano Quartet in G Minor). ♦ Oct. 20 at 7:30 and Oct. 21 at 4: Mozart's Divertimento for String Trio precedes the Piano Trio by Tchaikovsky. The musicians include the pianist Rita Sloan and the violinist Mark Peskanov. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

SOLO FLIGHTS 2001: "PIANORAMA"
A festival of five concerts presented by four pianists (Sarah Cahill, Michael Harrison, Marija Ilic, and Amy Rubin), featuring daring new music from around the world. (Clark Studio Theatre, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza. Oct. 18 at 7 and Oct. 19-20 at 7 and 9. For tickets and program information, call 663-1967.)

EMERSON STRING QUARTET AND COMPLICITE: "THE NOISE OF TIME"
Six encore performances of the acclaimed collaboration of last season, a perfect match of the Emerson's technical brilliance and the director Simon McBurney's radical dramatic vision. Based on Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 15 (the composer's own requiem), for which the quartet memorized its parts, the show vividly evokes the haunted inner life of the Soviet composer. (John Jay Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St. 721-6500. Oct. 18-19 at 8, Oct. 20 at 3 and 8, and Oct. 21 at 3 and 7:30.)

"XENAKIS REMEMBERED"
In these challenging times, many listeners may want to avoid the astringent tones of twentieth-century modernist music, understandably seeking comfort in the more euphonious sounds of the standard repertory. But the music of Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001)—mathematician, architect, and brilliant avant-garde composer—may be more relevant than ever. (Xenakis knew something of tragedy himself: he was grievously wounded while fighting for the Greek resistance in 1944.) Born from the harsh crucible of experience, the rigor and intensity of his works are matched by a passionate humanity; they remain a triumph of the mind and spirit. Rand Steiger conducts the musicians of Ensemble Sospeso in five signature works (including "Palimpsest," from 1979), at Miller Theatre. (Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Oct. 19 at 8.)

PARTHENIA: "GOE FROM MY WINDOW"
Music by Orlando Gibbons provides the title for the viol consort's latest program, which also includes works by Purcell, Dowland, Byrd, and others; the viol player Alison Crum and the lutenist Roy Marks are the guest artists. (Grace Church, Broadway at 10th St. 358-5942. Oct. 20 at 8.)

ERIC CUTLER AND ISRAEL GURSKY
The Marilyn Horne Foundation presents a recital by the young tenor and the young pianist, featuring songs by Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt, and Reynaldo Hahn. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Oct. 21 at 3.)

SEQUITUR SPOTLIGHT SERIES: SARA LAIMON
Laimon, the new-music ensemble's resident pianist, explores the vibrant American musical ethos of the nineteen-forties, presenting works by Ruggles (the rarely performed "Evocations"), Bernstein, Elliott Carter (the magisterial Piano Sonata), Lukas Foss, and Leon Kirchner. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Oct. 21 at 8.)

BRENTANO STRING QUARTET
The brilliant young American quartet begins "Art of Fugues," a three-concert series exploring the majesty of counterpoint, with a program of Haydn, Novák, and Beethoven (the Quartet in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 131). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Oct. 22 at 8.)

MARTHA ARGERICH AND NELSON FREIRE
The two pianists, who have worked as a duo since 1968, present a program of Brahms, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, and others. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 23 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS
Oct. 17 at 7:30: Adrienne Rich, Galway Kinnell, Grace Paley, and other poets join Hayden Carruth for a celebration of his eightieth birthday and the publication of his latest book, "Doctor Jazz." (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Tickets at the door.) ♦ Oct. 17 at 8: By Dick Wimmer, from his collection of comic novels, "Irish Wine: The Trilogy." (Rocky Sullivan's, 129 Lexington Ave., between 28th and 29th Sts. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Oct. 22 at 7:30: *New Yorker* poetry editor Alice Quinn is the host of a program titled "In a Time of Crisis, a Reading of Poems," featuring United States Poet Laureate Billy Collins, Eve Ensler, Jorie Graham, Yusef Komunyakaa, Stanley Kunitz, Robert Pinsky, and other writers. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Tickets at the door.)

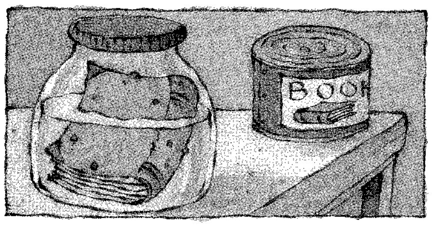
TALKS
Oct. 18 at 6:30: The *sake* master Kosuke Kuji and the master brewer Philip Harper talk about the popular Japanese rice wine. John Gauntner, the author of "The Saké Handbook," is the moderator. A tasting follows. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015.) ♦ Oct. 22 at 6: In honor of the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the publication of "Moby Dick," John Bryant, an English professor at Hofstra University, moderates a discussion about Melville's novel between the artist Frank Stella and the literary critic Robert Wallace. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0855.) ♦ Oct. 23 at 6:30: The artist and filmmaker Shirin Neshat talks about her recent work. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. For more information, call 980-4575.)

TOUR
Oct. 20 from 2 to 5: As a part of the Coalition for the Homeless's annual Artwalk event, the advocacy group has organized self-guided and curator-led tours of the studios of more than thirty artists, including Christo and Jeanne Claude, Vito Acconci, and James Nares. For more information, call 564-6367.

BOOK CURRENTS

The Spices of Life

"Stockpiling food still helps people at least feel prepared for the worst," Sue Shephard writes in **PICKLED, POTTED, AND CANNED** (Simon & Schuster)—hence the Web site justincasefoods.com which handles anxiety in a particularly contemporary manner by selling freeze-dried, vacuum-packed, and dehydrated comestibles. But the autumnal urge to hoard and preserve is very old, and very powerful: Shephard explains that even such odd-sounding foods as fermented "high" hare and giant "family" cheeses have been considered delicacies.

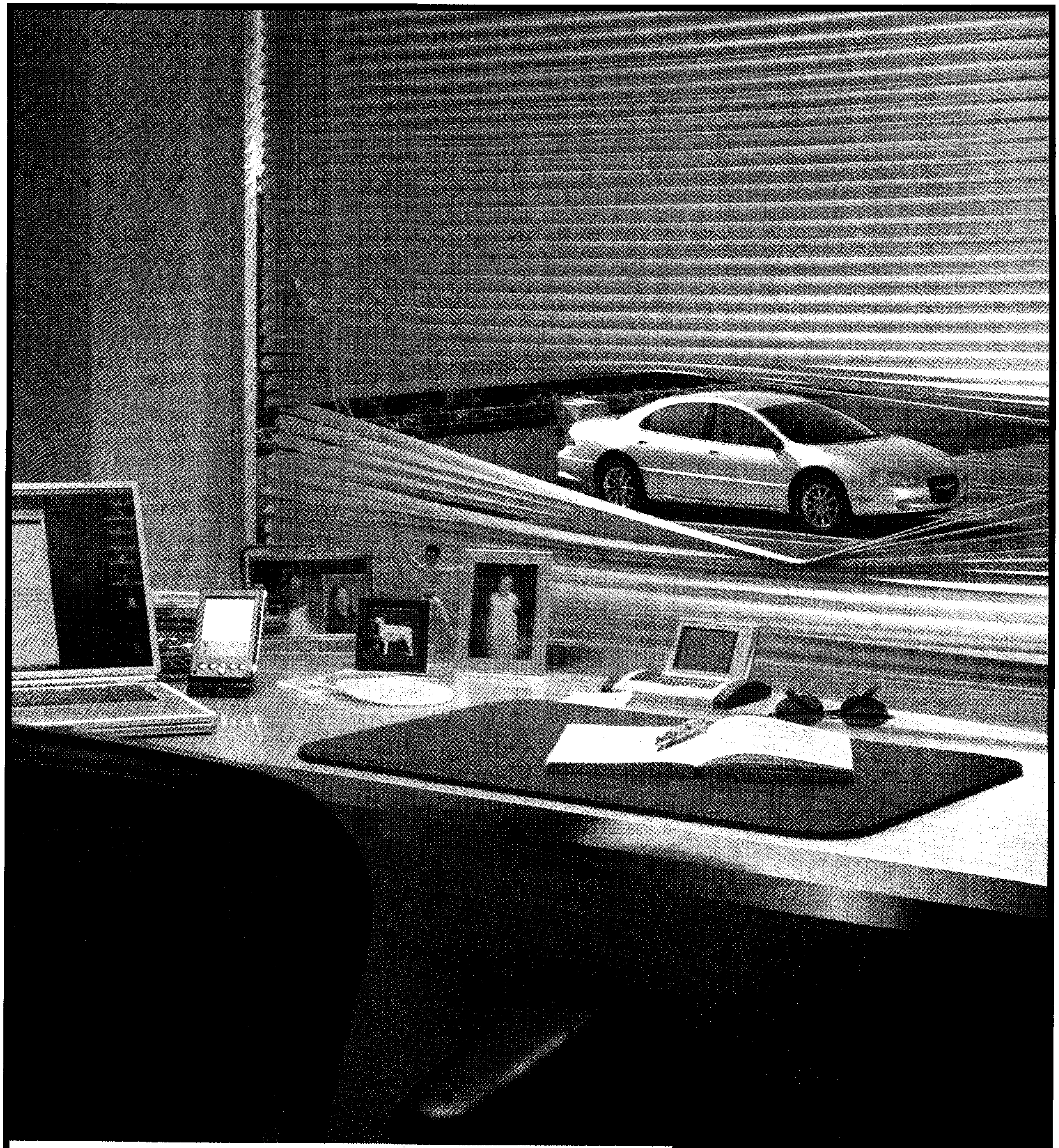


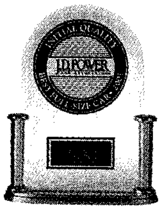
One of the best preservatives is also one of the oldest; Mark Kurlansky's **SALT: A WORLD HISTORY** (Walker) looks back at its influence. Though salt was never quite worth its weight in gold, its once steep price and desirability have invested it with metaphorical meaning. "Salary" derives from it, and so, more tenuously, does "soldier," which is fitting given the seasoning's pivotal role in empire-building and war. Rome sold salt to its citizens at artificially high prices to fund the Punic Wars, the Hapsburgs controlled Central Europe through its salt mines, and the shortage of salt in the South was decisive in the outcome of the Civil War.

If salt has a political life, saffron has a romantic one, and it's recorded in the pillow-book-like **SECRETS OF SAFFRON: THE VAGABOND LIFE OF THE WORLD'S MOST SEDUCTIVE SPICE** (Beacon), by Pat Willard. Saffron is the hard to harvest pollen of a fragile Mediterranean crocus, which requires the soil it grows in to be "rich, well dressed, carefully tended." This deep-orange seasoning, which is the reason bouillabaisse tastes so good, has uses that go far beyond the kitchen. It has appeared in Minoan frescoes, as a dye in Persian rugs, and even in ladies' toilettes, where it's been used as a perfume, a bath powder, and an antidepressant.

—*Dana Goodyear*

SERGIO RUZZIER





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MOVIES OPENING

BERLIN BABYLON
A documentary about the rebuilding of the German capital after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Hubertus Siegert directed. In German. Opening Oct. 17. (Film Forum.)

BURNT MONEY
Marcelo Pineyro directed this crime thriller set in Buenos Aires about two gay bank robbers. In Spanish. Opening Oct. 19. (Quad Cinema.)

THE ENDURANCE
Sir Ernest Shackleton's 1914 Antarctic expedition and rescue mission is the subject of a documentary by George Butler. Based on the book by Caroline Alexander. Opening Oct. 19.

FOCUS
An adaptation of Arthur Miller's novel about a Brooklyn couple (William H. Macy and Laura Dern) who are mistaken for Jewish Americans during the Second World War. Opening Oct. 19.

FROM HELL
The Hughes brothers directed this drama about Jack the Ripper. With Johnny Depp and Heather Graham. Opening Oct. 19.

INTIMACY
An erotic drama about a man (Mark Rylance) who leaves his marriage and begins having anonymous encounters with a new woman (Kerry Fox). Patrice Chereau directed. Opening Oct. 17.

THE LAST CASTLE
Rod Lurie ("The Contender") directed this action picture set in a maximum-security military prison. With Robert Redford, James Gandolfini, and Mark Ruffalo. Opening Oct. 19.

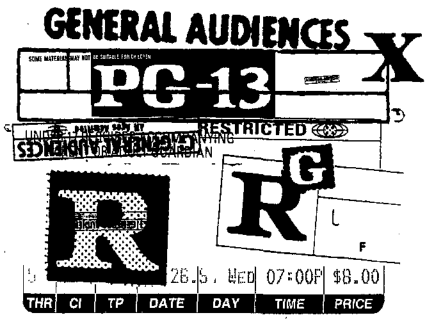
RIDING IN CARS WITH BOYS
A coming-of-age drama with Drew Barrymore as a teen-age mother in the nineteen-sixties. Also with Steve Zahn and Sara Gilbert. Opening Oct. 19.

WAKING LIFE
Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Oct. 17.

FILM NOTES

THE AMERICAN ASTRONAUT
Cory McAbee's black-and-white feature début (which he wrote, directed, and stars in) has all the quirky kick of a budget-impaired independent film. The story, set in the future, tells of a shipping contractor chased by a deranged killer, but it's just an occasion for McAbee to run wild with his genre-busting ideas. The film is filled with psychotic Astaire-style musical sequences, Three Stooges-esque humor, slimy nightmare imagery, and hilarious Flash Gordon-inspired space scenes. The strange brew may not be to everyone's taste, but there's no mistaking the original and talented point of view McAbee brings to his grab-bag adventure.—*Bruce Diones* (Angelika Film Center.)

BANDITS
Bruce Willis as a macho daredevil with thinning long hair and an impassively cool manner; Billy Bob Thornton as a fussbudget hypochondriac who squints and starts and hears bells ringing in his head. They work together as polite, nonviolent bank robbers. But why? God knows we're willing to be amused, but the picture needs a bit more reality in order for us to accept it as a fiction. Some of Billy Bob's tremors are funny, but we never understand what holds these two together. The director, Barry Levinson, wants to cross "Bonnie and Clyde" with "It Happened One Night," but the combination doesn't work. He also makes frequent intercuts to a droning TV news show about the bank robbers, a device that kills the movie's momentum every time. With Cate Blanchett as the madcap married woman who throws in her lot with the two men.—*David Denby* (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)



THE BAND WAGON
The Comden-Green script isn't as consistently fresh as the one they did for "Singin' in the Rain," but there have been few screen musicals as good as this 1953 picture, starring those two great song-and-dance men Fred Astaire and Jack Buchanan. Actually, Buchanan's dancing and his rosy-ripe way with his lines (satirical cant about the theatuh) have such style and flourish that he steals the picture. (His role is a spoof of Orson Welles.) The plot, about a movie star (Astaire) trying for a comeback on Broadway and falling in love with a ballerina (Cyd Charisse), is a relaxed excuse for a series of urbane revue numbers, which includes "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "That's Entertainment," "Triplets" (featuring Astaire, Buchanan, and Nanette Fabray), and culminates in the "Girl Hunt" dance sequence—a parody of Mickey Spillane's bloody boudoir fiction, with Astaire as the detective and Charisse as the good-bad women in his life. Vincente Minnelli directed.—*Pauline Kael* (Paris.)

THE BLOOD OF A POET
Jean Cocteau's first film is an enigmatic account of a poet's dreams and ecstasies and obsession with the unknown, composed in four illogical, timeless sequences that happen in the instant that a chimney topples. The first time you see this 1930 film, you're likely to find it silly, autoerotic, static, absurd, and you may feel cheated after having heard so much about it. But though it may seem to have no depth, you're not likely to forget it—it has a suggestiveness unlike any other film. Almost twenty years later, in "Orpheus," Cocteau orchestrated the themes he first explored here. In French.—*P.K.* (Cinema Classics; Oct. 16-17.)

CHOP SUEY
Bruce Weber's new picture plays like a home movie filled with his particular pleasures and friends: the hip jazz singer Frances Faye, the jujitsu master Rickson Gracie, and Diana Vreeland, among others. He gives them all room to speak and entertain in the kindest of environments (Vreeland in her opulent apartment, Gracie with his family on the lawn). At the movie's center is the handsome, gap-toothed Peter Johnson, a high-school wrestler whom Weber discovered in Iowa and has been photographing obsessively over the last few years. Weber captures Johnson's adventurousness and innocence with such gentleness and humor that the film, and its myriad subjects, come together to form a deeply personal joyride.—*B.D.* (Film Forum.)

LA CIÉNAGA
The title translates as "The Swamp," and here it applies to the claustrophobic confines of a summer mansion and the imploding family that inhabits it, like refugees from a Cheever story. Lucrecia Martel, the Argentinean writer-director, has a gift for domestic detail—the way children talk over each other, the wordless stares, and the kind of mess people make when they never pick up after themselves. Her house is a complicated latticework of servants, cousins, and half-remembered quarrels and affairs. There is little nobility on display; when the family matriarch takes to her bed, her daughters and son spend most of the day beside her. Martel has chosen to shine a light on the accumulated sadness of compromise, a world without grace. It's a bitter, affecting journey. In Spanish.—*Michael Agger* (Cinema Village.)

THE DEEP END
A heartfelt and beautifully made neo-noir thriller that takes its moods and colors from the turquoise blue of Lake Tahoe. A mother of three, Margaret (Tilda Swinton), discovers a dead body outside her family's lakeside home one morning. It is her teen-age son's gay lover, a Reno club owner and lowlife, and Margaret sets about disposing of the corpse as if it were a particularly cumbersome household nuisance. The movie, which is beautifully shot by Giles Nuttgens, develops rhapsodic and fatalistic moods that hold you even when the story becomes improbable. Written and directed by the team of Scott McGehee and David Siegel.—*D.D.* (Reviewed in our issue of 8/13/01.) (First & 62nd Cinemas and Village East.)

DINNER RUSH
A modestly scaled independent film about a long, long evening of cooking, eating, intrigue, hustle, sex, and murder at a Tribeca trattoria. The movie, well directed by Bob Giraldi, is made up of many little vignettes, most of them incisively written by the team of Rick Shaughnessy and Brian Kalata. Danny Aiello plays the tough-old-pro owner who may give up the place to his son (Edoardo Ballerini), a brilliant chef who has turned the family restaurant into something very chic. With Kirk Acevedo as a compulsive gambler who works as a sous-chef, Sandra Bernhard as a food writer in a wig, and many others. The movie was shot at Gigino, an actual restaurant that Giraldi owns.—*D.D.* (10/1/01) (BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, State, and Union Square.)

DON'T SAY A WORD
Vicious jewel thieves kidnap a smart little girl; her father, a master psychiatrist (Michael Douglas), must wrest a certain bit of information that the thieves want from a young woman (Brittany Murphy) who may or may not be crazy. Meanwhile, the psychiatrist's wife (Famke Janssen) lies in bed with a broken leg and fights off the gang with her crutch. All these not quite fascinating activities take place in an oppressive, gray-blue Manhattan and culminate in a violent fight that goes on forever in the semi-darkness of a graveyard. The movie's gravity is inane; nothing here works. Directed by Gary Fleder.—*D.D.* (Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia I and II, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Union Square.)

A DREAM OF PASSION
Jules Dassin, a marvelous melodramatist in "Night and the City" and "Rififi," came a cropper as a tragedian in this 1978 picture from Greece, mingling the mounting of a production of Euripides' "Medea" with the story of a real-life homicidal mother—a Christian-fundamentalist American who kills her three children. Melina Mercouri plays the stage star who becomes the murderess's advocate, but Ellen Burstyn takes the acting honors as a sort of Stephen King version of Medea, showing us the hurt, sensual woman hidden inside the Bible-thumper.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; Oct. 17-18.)

FAT GIRL
A pitiful title for this gnawing French film, directed by Catherine Breillat, about the love-hate relationship between two teen-age sisters—one beautiful, the other not—during a family summer vacation. For the most part, the film is an artful examination of first love and sexual awakenings, but the tender, quiet scenes have a restless play beneath them. There's a psychological tension to Breillat's neutral style, and she employs it in an unnerving way whether she's filming a graphic love scene, a long drive, or a short, sharp burst of violence. In French.—*B.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

THE GOLDEN COACH
At his greatest, Jean Renoir expressed the beauty in our common humanity; that's what Anna Magnani at *her* greatest also expressed. This 1953 movie—his tribute to the commedia dell'arte—is also a tribute to her fabulous gifts, and she gives the film its gusto. We see her here not only as a sensual, earthy "woman of the people" but as an artist who exhausts her resources in creating the illusion of volcanic reality. The film is set in a dusty frontier in Renaissance Peru: a band of Italian strolling players

is attempting to bring art to South America. The movie has been compared to "Così Fan Tutte"—it is light and serious, cynical and beautiful, a blend of color, wit, and Vivaldi music.—*P.K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Oct. 20-21.)

HEARTS IN ATLANTIS

Based on a Stephen King story, this adaptation directed by Scott Hicks is treacly beyond all reason. The screenplay—pure mush—overflows with scenes that allow the characters to be caressed by a golden, understanding light. The film is so lacking in movement that there seems to be no direction, just gloppy cinematography. Anthony Hopkins plays the joyless lead role; he's a huggable psychic stranger who befriends a fatherless boy.—*B.D.* (Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

HEAVEN'S GATE

Michael Cimino's 1980 treatment of the Johnson County War was an epic fiasco and a watershed in movie history, ending the brief era when American directors could expect to function as auteurs. The bloody 1892 conflict between the wealthy cattle ranchers who took over the Wyoming range and the smaller farmers who often thieved off their stock ushered in an age of moral ambiguity on America's frontier. Cimino reduces everything to a simple case of plutocrats bullying immigrants and spends the first half of his two-hundred-and-nineteen-minute running time depicting saucy madam Isabelle Huppert bouncing between Harvard-educated Kris Kristofferson and rough-and-tumble gunslinger Christopher Walken. Throughout, Cimino operates more like a visual anthologist than a visionary director. There's a "McCabe and Mrs. Miller" bordello vignette, a "Great Northfield Minnesota Raid" baseball match, and so on. There's also a roller-skating scene that includes roller-*fiddling*. Not until after the intermission do the guns start blasting. "What one loves in life are the things that fade" went the flossy ad line; all the movie says is that the people one loves in life are sure to die.—*M.S.* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Oct. 20.)

JOY RIDE

For the first half hour, John Dahl's latest movie is true to the joviality of its title. By the end, nothing could be more ironic, unless you think it is joyful to be locked in a motel room with a shotgun tied to the door handle. Dahl, as he proved in "The Last Seduction" and "Red Rock West," has a gift for unearthing laughter in the dark, and the new picture marks a welcome return to form. Steve Zahn and Paul Walker play a couple of brothers, driving across country with only a CB radio for entertainment. A practical joke goes badly wrong, and they become the terrified quarry of a man—or a voice—called Rusty Nail. The film belongs to Steve Zahn: his helpless tendency both to taunt the world and to cringe with dread at the consequences has never been put so smartly to the test. With Leelee Sobieski as a semi-girlfriend.—*Anthony Lane* (10/8/01) (Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Murray Hill Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

L.I.E.

A delinquent kid (Paul Franklin Dano) first robs and then befriends a middle-aged ex-marine (Brian Cox), who knows a lucky chance when he sees one. As movie subjects go, pedophilia is volatile to the point of explosive, and Michael Cuesta has done well to hold his nerve and forge something so clever and careful. If anything, the cleverness cuts too deep. Cuesta's desire for tolerance is so pronounced, and Cox's skill is so generous and engaging, that, if you don't watch out, you can end up being seduced by the same strategic charm that ensnares the boy. The picture is suavely shot and never less than disturbing. Cuesta falters only when the comedy of sly, vicious seduction recedes to make way for a solid event—a guy keeling over with a heart attack, say, in the middle of a restaurant. But this is Cox's film, by a mile; as a good Shakespearean, he knows how to flood villainy with dramatic life. What do you do with a monster who dares you not to like him?—*A.L.* (9/10/01) (Empire 25 and Union Square.)

MULHOLLAND DRIVE

A woman wanders away from a car wreck and into a strange house. Little old people scurry under the foot of a door, squeaking like mice. Yes, it's a David Lynch project. This one began life as a TV pilot; you can just imagine the aghast faces of the network executives as they saw what they had commissioned. In the event, the elongated weirdness, stretching to two and a half hours, feels discomfortingly at home on the larger screen; if you ever wanted to see an epic horror-soap, this is what it would look like. Many established Lynch motifs are in place, most of them summoned from one corner or another of the nineteen-fifties: the innocent blonde (Naomi Watts), the baffled brunette (Laura Elena Harring), the clueless cop (Robert Forster). Addicts of the director will tie themselves in knots trying to pick the lock of the film; the rest of us can lie back and enjoy the spooking. With Justin Theroux and, as a tough old landlady, Ann Miller. Yes, *that* Ann Miller.—*A.L.* (10/8/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE

A startlingly fresh 1985 movie about life in South London among the surly white street gangs who live on the dole and feel that they're in a dead-end society and the Pakistani immigrants who know that this society is the best they can hope for, and try to move upward by wriggling through the cracks. In the foreground is a love affair between a dark-eyed, softly handsome, almost flower-like Pakistani teen-ager, Omar (Gordon Warnecke), who grew up in this neighborhood, and a young blond street lout, Johnny (Daniel Day-Lewis). Directed by Stephen Frears, from a witty script by Hanif Kureishi, the film catches you up in the racketeering and decay of modern big-city life; you feel that your blinders have been taken off.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 18-19.)

OUR LADY OF THE ASSASSINS

In Barbet Schroeder's new movie, a Colombian writer returns to his native Medellín to mourn his lost youth and, while he's at it, pick up a new one. Schroeder has made some spicy pictures in his time, but this one feels lacklustre by comparison, and the two main performers—Anderson Ballesteros as the hustler and German Jaramillo as his aging mentor—tend to drift through their scenes, trying not to notice the hellfire around them. Whether they are genuinely ground down by the woes of the world or simply exhausted by years of casual sex is hard to work out; to be fair, few directors could make a film about moral anesthesia without sinking into glumness, and Schroeder does a pretty good job of insuring that no one in the audience will book a Colombian vacation in the near future. In Spanish.—*A.L.* (9/10/01) (Village East Cinemas.)

STRANGER THAN PARADISE

The writer-director Jim Jarmusch uses the minimalist aesthetic for low-key comic effects in his 1984 picture. This punk picaresque is in black-and-white, and each scene is a single take followed by a blackout; the three anomic principal characters—deadpan deadbeats—live in dead space. Jarmusch keeps the picture formal and cool, and it has an odd, nonchalant charm; it's fun.—*P.K.* (Cinema Classics; Oct. 18-22.)

TOGETHER

Lukas Moodysson's exemplary comedy, one part distressing to two parts delectable, is set in a hippie commune in the mid-nineteen-seventies—in Sweden, no less, where the hippie ethic was an article of faith. Within minutes, we know not only where we are but whom we are dealing with; as a director, Moodysson is the perfect host, calmly introducing us, without the trace of a sneer, to a broad selection of trolls and fruitcakes. What follows is a dance of desire, as men, women, and even children pair off with one another; under it all, like a bass note, sounds the story of Elisabeth (Lisa

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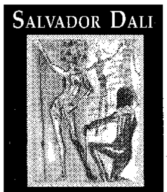

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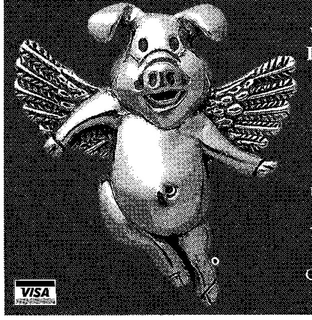

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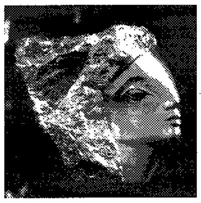

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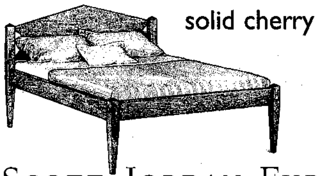

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Lindgren) and her drunken husband, Rolf (Michael Nyqvist), strangers to this utopian colony, who finally find refuge, and a kind of reconciliation, in its absurd dreams. That is Moodysson's great trick: to blow hot and cold, allowing us both to laugh at these bearded types and to respect, even envy, their frazzled companionship. With the excellent Emma Samuelsson as the warring couple's daughter, and with the help of Abba—what did you expect?—on the soundtrack. In Swedish.—A.L. (8/20 & 27/01) (Village East Cinemas.)

TRAINING DAY

A synthetically plotted melodrama, but still it has power and depth. Denzel Washington is Alonzo Harris, a decorated Los Angeles narcotics cop who breaks in his new partner, Jake Hoyt (Ethan Hawke), a talented rookie from the Valley. Alonzo bullies and taunts the young man, teaching him the brutal wisdom of the street; Jake, who is highly moral, eager to impress, and ambitious, is hurt and baffled. It takes us a while to realize that what seem like random incidents on the street are really the outer edges of a malaise—the dishonesty of Alonzo and the other members of his undercover unit. Despite some trashy and conventionally violent scenes, the movie is psychologically interesting: the dominating and witty Alonzo wants the respect of the young man he's trying to corrupt. Washington is tormented and brilliant; it's his best performance so far. Hawke, after a quiet beginning, opens his eyes and finds his voice. Pungently written by David Ayer. Directed with high-tension skill by Antoine Fuqua.—D.D. (10/15/01) (Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

VA SAVOIR

A slow-moving and complicated romantic comedy directed by Jacques Rivette which works the permutations of love and deceit to a fare-thee-well. In Paris, a visiting Italian theatre troupe puts on a Pirandello play (which we see at exhausting length). The leading lady (Jeanne Balibar), who is French, loves the Italian star and manager of the troupe (Sergio Castellitto) but pines for an old boyfriend, the Parisian philosophy professor (Jacques Bonaffé) she left behind three years ago. The Italian, meanwhile, looks for a lost Goldoni manuscript and begins a flirtation with a ravishing young blonde (Hélène de Fougerolles). There's more, much more, and eventually everyone connects with everyone else. The movie is absorbing—Castellitto is particularly charming—but surprisingly unresonant in memory, perhaps because the passions seem entirely theoretical. By the end, the offstage happenings become more frantic and absurd than the Pirandello play itself—a Pirandellian exchange of art and life. In French.—D.D. (BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza, and Union Square.)

WAKING LIFE

A trip into uncharted territory from Richard Linklater, the director of "Dazed and Confused." More than ever, the title of that great movie sounds like a job description for all the Linklater characters still to come. The new picture is animated, although that word sounds too lively for the scores of people who amble through the frame, displaying just enough energy to talk. Maybe the director should have coined a new term for his technique—"shot in Slackerama" or something. The talkers are real people, filmed and then transmuted, on computer, into graphic form; you can, for instance, recognize Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke—lovers in another Linklater project—still lying in bed, as if their love were still alight. There is plenty of smart, incidental trickery: one woman's hair turns into snakes, like Medusa's, and an angry guy in jail glows as red as hellfire. If there is a problem here, it lies with the aimless drift of the conversation and dialogue. Is the look of the film not hip and fantastical enough, without any help from the script? Could such colorful invention not have used, dare one say, a plot?—A.L. (Union Square.)

ZOOLANDER

Ben Stiller's comedy (he wrote, directed, and stars) is at best intermittently funny. He plays an empty-headed male model, and Owen Wilson is his stoned surf-boy rival. In their scenes together they generate a goofy comic energy, like the two most demented kids on the playground. Otherwise, the jokes are reheated (let this be the end of latte humor) and the scenes padded and overlong. The big joke—that fashion designers have formed a secret society to protect their sweatshop labor sources—seems severely misguided.—M.A. (42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

APOCALYPSE NOW REDUX (8/6/01)
Astor Plaza, Empire 25, and Waverly.

AUDITION
Empire 25 and Village East Cinemas.

CORKY ROMANO
East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village East Cinemas.

GHOST WORLD (8/6/01)
Angelika Film Center and Empire 25.

IRON MONKEY
East 86th Street Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village Theatre VII.

LISA PICARD IS FAMOUS
59th Street East Cinemas.

MY FIRST MISTER
Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin.

THE OTHERS (8/13/01)
Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.

SERENDIPITY
Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.

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Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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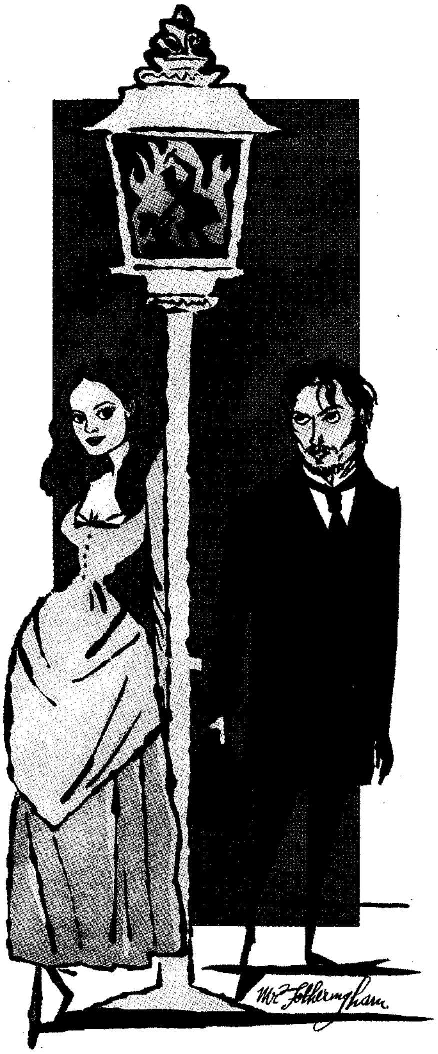
Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St. (945-3418).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.

The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.



Opening October 19, Heather Graham and Johnny Depp in "From Hell."

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Oct. 19 at 7: A discussion with Richard Linklater about his new movie "Tape" (2001). ♦ A Michael Cimino retrospective. Oct. 20 at 2: "Heaven's Gate" (†). ♦ Oct. 21 at 1: "Thunderbolt and Lightfoot" (1974). ♦ Oct. 21 at 3:30: "The Sunchaser" (1996). Cimino will be present for a discussion following the film. ♦ Repertory nights. Oct. 20-21 at 6:30: "Fellini Satyricon" (1969, Federico Fellini; in Italian).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Oct. 17-19 at 7 and 10; Oct. 20 at 4, 7, and 10; Oct. 21 at 3, 6, and 9; and Oct. 22-23 at 7 and 10: the American première of Béla Tarr's "Werckmeister Harmonies" (2000; in Hungarian).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Through Oct. 30: Australian films. Oct. 17 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: Short films by Aboriginal directors. ♦ Oct. 18 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Mabo: Life of an Island Man" (1997, Trevor Graham). ♦ Oct. 19 at 2, 7:30, and 9:40: "Sweetie" (1989, Jane Campion). ♦ Oct. 20 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Yolngu Boy" (2000, Stephen Johnson). ♦ Oct. 21 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Praise" (1998, John Curran). ♦ Oct. 22 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Year of the Dogs" (1997, Michael Cordell). ♦ Oct. 23 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Sadness" (1999, Tony Ayres).

CINEMA CLASSICS
332 E. 11th St. (677-5368)—Oct. 16-17 at 8 and 10: "L'Age d'Or" (1930, Luis Buñuel; in French) and "Blood of a Poet" (†). ♦ Oct. 18-22: "Stranger Than Paradise" (†).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—A tribute to Melina Mercouri. Oct. 17-18 at 1:30, 5:15, and 9: "A Dream of Passion" (†). ♦ Oct. 17-18 at 3:30 and 7:15: "The Rehearsal" (1974, Dassin). ♦ Oct. 19-23 at 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, and 10: A new print of Terry Gilliam's "Jabberwocky" (1977).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Classic French films. Oct. 23 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "La Vie de Bohème" (1992, Aki Kaurismaki).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through Oct. 28: A salute to Britain's FilmFour. Oct. 18 at 2 and Oct. 19 at 8: "My Beautiful Laundrette" (†). ♦ Oct. 18 at 4: "Beautiful Thing" (1995, Hettie MacDonald). ♦ Oct. 18 at 6: "Late Night Shopping" (2001, Saul Metzstein). ♦ Oct. 19 at 2 and Oct. 21 at 3: "Rita, Sue and Bob Too" (1986, Alan Clarke). ♦ Oct. 19 at 6: The best of British advertising. ♦ Oct. 20 at 1 and Oct. 23 at 6: "East Is East" (1999, Damien O'Donnell). ♦ Oct. 20 at 3: "Raining Stones" (1993, Ken Loach). ♦ Oct. 20 at 5: "Naked" (1993, Mike Leigh). ♦ Oct. 21 at 1: "Letter to Brezhnev" (1985, Chris Bernard). ♦ Oct. 21 at 5 and Oct. 22 at 1: "Trainspotting" (1996, Danny Boyle). ♦ Oct. 22 at 3: "The Crying Game" (1992, Neil Jordan). ♦ Oct. 23 at 2: "Bhaji on the Beach" (1993, Gurinder Chadha).

THE SCREENING ROOM
54 Varick St. (334-2100)—Through Oct. 25: Movies from the Edinburgh Film Festival. Oct. 19 at 1: "My Son the Fanatic" (1999, Udayan Prasad). ♦ Oct. 19 at 3 and Oct. 22 at 5: "Beautiful People" (1999, Jasmin Dizdar). ♦ Oct. 19 at 7 and Oct. 20 at 9: "Strumpet" (2001, Danny Boyle). ♦ Oct. 19 at 9 and Oct. 21 at 3: "Ratcatcher" (1999, Lynne Ramsay). ♦ Oct. 19 at midnight, Oct. 21 at 9, and Oct. 22 at 3: "Love Is the Devil" (1998, John Maybury). ♦ Oct. 20 at 1 and Oct. 21 at 5: "The Full Monty" (1997, Peter Cattaneo). ♦ Oct. 20 at 3, Oct. 21 at 1, and Oct. 23 at 3: "A Room for Romeo Brass" (1999, Shane Meadows). ♦ Oct. 20 at 5, Oct. 21 at 7, and Oct. 23 at 5: "When I Was Twelve" (2001, Dominic Savage). ♦ Oct. 20 and Oct. 23 at 7: "As the Beast Sleeps" (2001, Harry Bradbeer). ♦ Oct. 20 at midnight and Oct. 22 at 9: "Nil by Mouth" (1997, Gary Oldman). ♦ Oct. 21 at 3: "Orphans" (1997, Peter Mullan). ♦ Oct. 22 at 7: "Under the Skin" (1997, Carine Adler).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Nov. 15: A tribute to *Cahiers du Cinéma.* Oct. 19 at 1, 5, and 9 and Oct. 22 at 1: "Orphée" (1949, Jean Cocteau; in French). ♦ Oct. 19 at 3:15 and 7:15 and Oct. 22 at 7: "Moi, un Noir" (1958, Jean Rouch; in French). ♦ Oct. 20 at 2 and 6:30 and Oct. 21 at 4:15: "The Golden Coach" (†). ♦ Oct. 20 at 4:15 and 8:30 and Oct. 22 at 3:15: "Viaggio in Italia" (1953, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian). ♦ Oct. 21 at 2 and 8:15 and Oct. 23 at 1: "Bitter Victory" (1957, Nicholas Ray). ♦ Oct. 21 at 6:30, Oct. 22 at 5:15, and Oct. 23 at 3: "Forty Guns" (1957, Samuel Fuller). ♦ Oct. 22 at 8:30: "The Wrong Man" (1956, Alfred Hitchcock).

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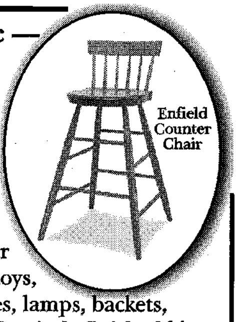
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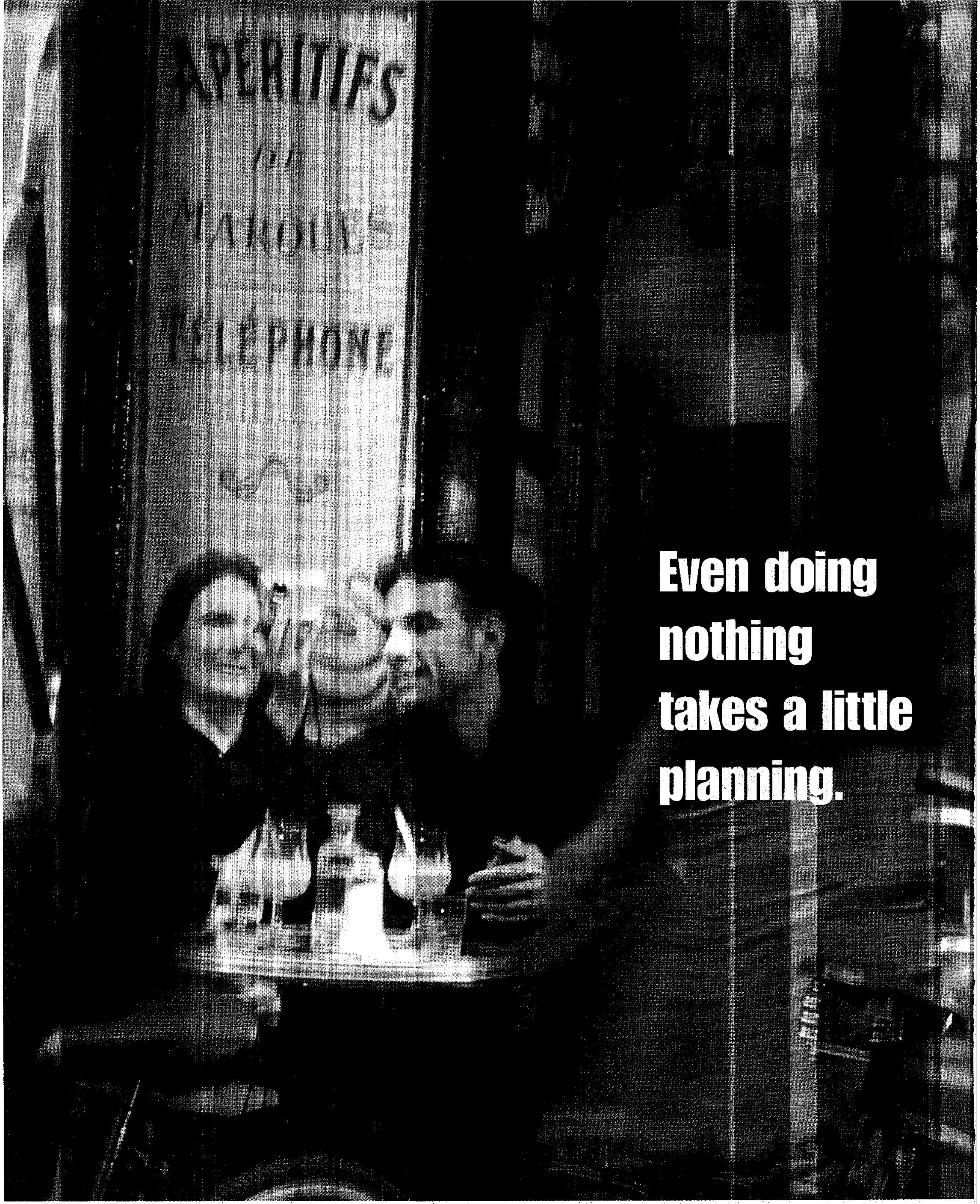
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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

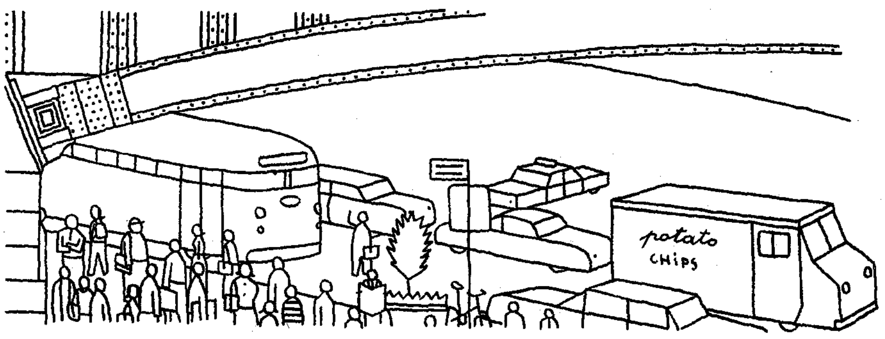
COMMENT
THE ISRAELI LINK

The war in Afghanistan is far from invisible. The image that has lingered longest from that otherworldly Sunday when the bombing began was not of the explosions as they played back to us on television—the neon streaks and sparks of green on a field of black—but, rather, a more distinct and chilling picture: a bearded man sitting in a cave and threatening the world with a state of constant terror.

When Osama bin Laden first issued a call for holy war several years ago, his priorities were clear: to eradicate the presence of American troops from the historical holy lands of Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The desire to drive Israel from the map of the Middle East was not quite an afterthought but it placed distinctly third in the hierarchy. In a videotaped message to the world that aired on October 7th, however, bin Laden seemed to decide that his call for a worldwide clash between "the camp of the faithful and the camp of infidels" would likely gain more passionate and immediate support if he put a heavier accent on the question of Israel and the Palestinians. He, more than anyone, has grasped that the nerve-racked autocrats in countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan (to say nothing of the tyrants in Syria and Iraq) have generally allowed their profoundly dissatisfied masses a single focus for their intense economic and political resentments: the existence of Israel. It is hard to make analogies between Hitler, who commanded the strongest army in Europe, and bin Laden, who commands "shadowy networks" that will take vast resources and infinite patience merely to define. But it is fair to say that they are joined by a sure instinct that hatred of the Jews is a timelessly convenient instrument of propaganda and cohesion. During the Second World War, the Prime Minister of Iraq and the Mufti of Jerusalem, among others, sympathized ardently with Berlin, despite a Nazi ideology that cast Arabs as inferior. Now, in cities from Cairo to Jakarta, newspaper analysts and street protesters assert that the Israelis are at the center of the murders of September 11th, that either they masterminded the hijackings or (a more genteel option) they are to blame because American support for Israel makes the United States a legitimate focus of Muslim fury.

On October 4th, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, gave a feverish and ill-considered speech in which he criticized the Bush Administration for forging an alliance against terrorism that includes, to one degree or another, states that countenance or sponsor terrorism themselves. Raising the spectre of appeasement, Sharon made an enormous rhetorical blunder. He said that Israel would not stand by and be sacrificed the way Czechoslovakia was in 1938—an analogy that, drawn to its end, would put George W. Bush in the role of Neville Chamberlain. "We can only depend on ourselves," Sharon said. The Bush Administration, in turn, declared Sharon's remarks "unacceptable," and Colin Powell telephoned Sharon twice, it was reported, to "dress him down." Sharon soon apologized, and his Foreign Minister, the infinitely more nimble Shimon Peres, has been on CNN ever since, promising fealty to the White House.

Bush was right to be angry, yet it is a curious thing, a maddening thing, that September 11th and its anxious after-



LAURENT CILLUFFO

math—the reports of anthrax infections in New York and Florida, the bomb scares, the security checks, the general atmosphere of apprehension—have not forged a greater sympathetic link with the Israeli condition. There is no question that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank has no future—it is morally and politically untenable. It is also worth remembering, however, that until earlier this year Israel and the Palestinians seemed on the path toward a historic resolution. Ehud Barak's offer to Yasir Arafat in January may have contained certain flaws, points demanding further negotiation, but it could not be written off as feeble or unserious. Barak offered the Palestinians a state taking in all of Gaza, ninety-six per cent of the West Bank and the dismantling of the Israeli settlements there, additional territory within Israel for safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank, control over the Temple Mount, and sovereignty over the Arab neighborhoods of East Jerusalem both within and outside of the Old City. Arafat rejected the plan, saying he could not allow a treaty to acknowledge that the Temple Mount is sacred to Jews as well as to Muslims, and insisted that as many as a million and a half Palestinian refugees be absorbed by Israel, a development that would markedly alter the demographics of a Jewish state.

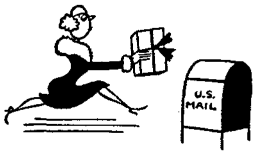
Bin Laden's description of the current state of affairs—"Israeli tanks rampage across Palestine"—eliminates, naturally, any mention of the suicide bombers of Islamic Jihad and Hamas, of attacks on bus stations and pizza parlors. His crude selectivity has provided a new rhetoric and his image a sick charismatic banner for the increasingly revanchist voices of Gaza and the West Bank. Last week, a prominent Hamas spokesman in Gaza, Abdel-Aziz Rantisi, said, "Bin Laden does not practice terrorism. The terrorist is the Zionist enemy and the Palestinian people are those who are burned by the fire of this terror."

A decade ago, Yasir Arafat chose sides in the Gulf War. He chose Saddam Hussein. This time, he has denounced Osama bin Laden, expressed sympathy with the American losses, and discounted any solidarity between the Palestinian Authority and Al Qaeda. He even authorized his police to put down a pro-bin Laden demonstration last week in Gaza. There are countless reasons to dismiss this reversal as rank cynicism, beginning with Arafat's biography and ending with his exploitation of suicide bombers in his own camp. But is it better to prolong an unwinnable war or to seize this opening? It is the singular question for Arafat as well as for the Israelis. Ten days before Sharon made his no-appeasement speech, he was cited in the Israeli daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* as advocating a Palestinian state. Sharon, too, has changed with time. The conflict has inflicted endless damage on both sides and, no matter what the complications of a settlement are, the alternative—of more armed conflict, of more recrimination, of no contact, of a deepening radicalism—is worse. A truce and an eventual treaty between Israel and the Palestinians is a necessity, and not because it might placate Osama bin Laden in his cave. The urgency long preceded him. Without a settlement, the future for both Israelis and Palestinians is unbearable to predict.

—*David Remnick*

DEPT. OF MISNOMERS

A PEN-PAL BLITZ



In recent weeks, the Manhattan School for Children, a public elementary school on West Ninety-third Street, has received thousands of parcels from schools around the world. The administrative office, on the fifth floor, has been cluttered with boxes of mail from Cologne, Queensland, Dallas, Saskatoon—poster tubes, pouches, envelopes within envelopes, filled with letters and art work from students expressing solidarity with the children of New York, in the wake of the World Trade Center attack. Many more boxes have been adopted by homeroom teachers, and still others are stacked in storage upstairs. Parents who have been cataloguing them estimate that in all there are twenty thousand pieces of correspondence—roughly forty per Manhattan School student.

One morning last week, Alysa Essenfeld, a school coördinator, was sorting through the boxes. Students drifted in and out of the office, making excuses for minor infractions. Essenfeld withdrew a sheaf of letters at random. Among them was one from a fifth-grade girl in Bloomington, Minnesota: "Dear Fifth Grader, I am sorry about the crash. I don't even know you, your name, or where you are, but I feel bad and all. I hope none of your loved ones died. My uncle was a couple blocks away when it happened. . . . He inhaled a lot of dust and plaster, but he was O.K. You know, to tell the truth, I didn't really pay attention to the attack until I found out about my uncle. Now I'll even listen to NPR, the most boring radio station in the universe (besides opera). Now I really care about what happens. Best wishes, Jane."

At first, the administrators at the Manhattan School didn't know what was happening: why were they getting so much mail, when their school was only one of hundreds in New York? But, as they sifted through the letters, it dawned on them. "Everyone was looking on the Internet," Kyle McCarthy, one of the parent cataloguers, said. "Teachers were typing 'Manhattan school' into their Web browsers, and this is what they came up with. And they just figured we were near the World Trade Center." In the minds of thousands of non-New Yorkers who had seen the Twin Towers collapse on TV, the Manhattan School for Children had become *the* Manhattan school for children. (This was a beneficent misinterpretation, compared with others. During the recent anthrax outbreak at the Florida headquarters of American Media, some have speculated that the company might be a target because of its name—that perhaps terrorists had taken "American Media" a bit too literally.)

Essenfeld laid parcels on a table. Here was one from Lelystad, in the Netherlands. "I found your school on the Internet and I hope you will appreciate our little gesture of love," a teacher had written. Inside was a stack of graphic colored-pencil drawings of the disaster—falling bodies, billowing flames. One showed a plane hitting the north tower, with a caption in crude tulip English: "I love joü soo mats. Aie tingk det jou mast ran." Another had an airline passenger exclaiming out the window of an approaching plane, "Look dat smoke!" A third, by a boy named Hakan, was a meticulous depiction of American fighter jets shooting down Israeli planes; the teacher's translation of the caption read, "I hope you will win. And don't lose. Go on!"

There was airmail from Cologne: "Liebe Amerikaner," and "We cancelled our party, and we wish you success (in rescuing people) . . . Und would be happy, if you do drawings or write us letters." Fifty origami cranes from Eugene, Oregon. Thirty dollars from a Wheaton, Missouri, kindergarten class, earmarked for ice-cream cones. (The Wheaton teacher wasn't sure how much ice cream cost in Manhattan but hoped that thirty dollars would suffice.) The Manhattan School had also received approximately a hundred and twenty handpainted T-shirts, five hundred stuffed animals and toys, a thousand "friendship bracelets," a hundred library books, and three hundred handmade flags. There was a drama-club video, from Memphis, and two abstract wax sculptures, of Peace and Hope, from Cumbria, England. There was Kona coffee, from Hawaii, and an eleven-pound Zabar's snack basket, from teachers in Seattle. Essenfeld seemed most excited about the poster tubes. Withers Elementary, in Dallas, had sent a hundred-foot-long banner as well as a laminated poster that read, "Howdy! From the Wildcat Cheerleaders." Fifth graders in Bethany, Oklahoma, had fashioned a giant American flag out of canvas, each star represented by a cutout photograph of a teacher or a student. Essenfeld held up a corner of the flag and said, "Isn't this cool?"

The problem now is what to do with all this mail. Some parents are making arrangements to give much of it to schools downtown—both to share the wealth and to speed response. They are also trying to find a permanent home for it. Last week, they offered it to the Museum of the City of New York, but the museum wasn't interested. They'd like to get most of the mail out of the school. Trauma counselors have recommended that teachers not dwell on the events of September 11th. One teacher told Kyle McCarthy, "It was very important for all those children to write those letters, but it's no longer important for our children to read them."

—*Nick Paumgarten*

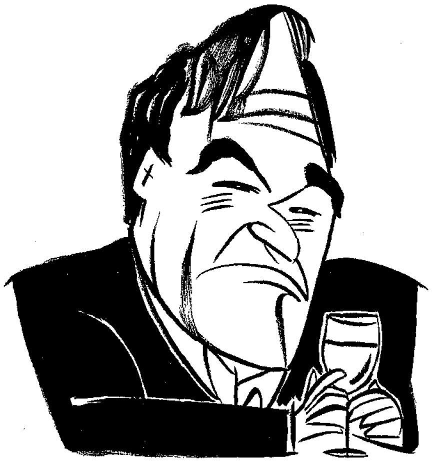
TOM BACHTELL

THE PICTURES

OLIVER STONE'S CHAOS THEORY

On the morning before the United States bombed Afghanistan, HBO Films presented a panel discussion, at Alice Tully Hall, entitled "Making Movies That Matter: The Role of Filmmaking in the National Debate." The people in the audience were restless, eager for someone to put their anger and unease into focus, and it wasn't long before one panelist, Bob Shaye, the C.E.O. of New Line Cinema, got them going by insisting that movies should entertain, not explain. Referring to his studio's forthcoming "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, he declared, "What the world needs now is hobbits."

As hisses filled the air, Oliver Stone, another panelist, shook his head in disbelief. From the start of the discussion, Stone, the writer-director of such political films as "Salvador" and "JFK," had seemed jumpy, swivelling his thick neck like a turret gun at the sound of any foolishness or naïveté. Now his voice rumbled up from his chest and he began to illuminate the dark levers that move the film industry and, by extension, the world. "There's been conglomeration under six principal princes—they're kings, they're barons!—and these six companies have control of the world," he said, referring to such corporations as Fox and AOL Time Warner. His voice grew louder as his ideas took shape. "Michael Eisner decides, 'I can't make a movie about Martin Luther King, Jr.—they'll be rioting at the gates of Disneyland!' That's bullshit! But that's what the new world order is." There was a storm of applause. "They control culture, they control ideas. And I think the revolt of September 11th was about 'Fuck you! Fuck your order—' "



Oliver Stone

"Excuse me," a fellow-panelist, Christopher Hitchens, said. " 'Revolt'?"

"Whatever you want to call it," Stone said.

"It was state-supported mass murder, using civilians as missiles," said Hitchens, a columnist for *Vanity Fair* and *The Nation*.

Stone wagged his head and continued. "The studios bought television stations," he said. "Why? Why did the telecommunications bill get passed at midnight, a hidden bill at midnight? The Arabs have a point! They're going to be joined by the people who objected in Seattle, and the usual ten per cent who are against everything, and it's going to be, like, twenty-five per cent of this country that's against the new world order. We need a trustbuster like Teddy Roosevelt to take the television stations away from the film companies and give them back to the people!" There was more applause, and a few uncertain murmurs. "Does anybody make a connection between the 2000 election"—for the Presidency—"and the events of September 11th?" he asked, and added cryptically, "Look for the thirteenth month!" He went on to say that the Palestinians who danced at the news of the attack were reacting just as people had responded after the revolutions in France and Russia.

Afterward, the panelists had lunch nearby, at Gabriel's. Hitchens stood outside, holding a glass of Scotch and a trembling cigarette. He was about to leave for Pakistan. "To say that this attack in any way resembles the French Revolution means you are a moral idiot, as well as an intellectual idiot," he said of Stone. "The man has completely lost it."

Inside the restaurant, Stone made his way, grinning, through the crowd. He plunged his hands into the hair of a young female producer and tugged, asking, "Is this real?" Although it seemed to most observers to be early afternoon, he twice observed that it was a wonderful night.

Stone sat in a booth, cradling a glass of white wine in his hands, and remarked that he hadn't slept in days. "The new world order is about order and control," he said. "This attack was pure chaos, and chaos is energy. All great changes have come from people or events that were initially misunderstood, and seemed frightening, like madmen. Einstein, Nikola Tesla, Gates. I think, I think . . . I think many things." He explained how the World Bank, McDonald's, and the studios' response to the threat of a Writers Guild strike last year were all manifestations of the new global conspiracy of order.

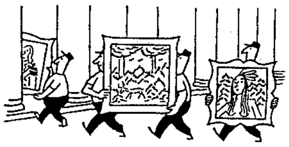
"This is the time for a bullet of a film about terrorism, like 'The Battle of Algiers' "—Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 movie about the conflict between the French and F.L.N. terrorist cells in Algeria, in which the director's sympathies lie with the terrorists. "You show the Arab side and the American side in a chase film with a 'French Connection' urgency, where you track people by satellite, like in 'Enemy of the State.' My movie would have the C.I.A. guys and the F.B.I. guys, but they blow it. They're a bunch of drunks from World War II who haven't recovered from the disasters of the sixties—the Kennedy assassination and Vietnam. My movie would show the new heroes of security, the people who really get the job done, who know where the secrets are."

And who would that be?

His eyes roamed, searching and sad. "I don't know yet."

—*Tad Friend*

DEPT. OF SECOND CHANCES
A MOTHBALLED MURAL



A resurrection took place in Brooklyn last week. Five extraordinary murals, created between 1929 and 1930 by the American muralist Mordeca (Mordi) Gassner, went on display some sixty-five years after they disappeared into a wooden crate. These works, which are known as "cartoons"—charcoal drawings, nine feet high and six feet wide, that were intended to serve as the basis of frescoes—attempt nothing less than to unify the sciences and the humanities. "They are absolutely fascinating," said Linda S. Ferber, the Mellon curator of American art at the Brooklyn Museum, who spoke at a noontime ceremony last Wednesday to honor the murals' unveiling. "They're a combination of the heroic murals of Thomas Hart Benton and Surrealism. They're obviously very indebted to Blake, but they're also reminiscent of the covers of early science-fiction books." Now restored and framed, they hang in the lobby of the Dibner/CATT building, as part of the permanent collection of Polytechnic University, in downtown Brooklyn.

Gassner was born in 1899, into a wealthy Jewish family of fur traders in Brooklyn. A true polymath, he acquired much of his understanding of Renaissance humanism, along with an encyclopedic knowledge of the history of science and technology, by reading books in the New York Public Library. (A color reproduction of his allegorical painting "Triangle" was given a full page in the December 12, 1925, issue of this magazine.) Gassner's social conscience—he was a supporter of workers' rights—attracted him to the work of muralists, especially that of the Mexican painter Diego Rivera, and by the mid-twenties Gassner had conceived his great work: "A Mural Monument to Modern Culture." By depicting progress in the sciences—chemistry, physics, biology, geology, and astronomy—in dense, convoluted compositions of naked human figures, Gassner wished to reaffirm the core humanist belief that man is the measure of all things.

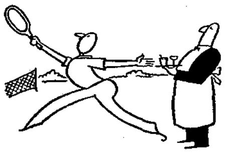
In 1928, Gassner and his wife, Augusta Klausner, a modern dancer, received a grant from the Guggenheim Foundation to pursue his project in Florence. The Italians thought so highly of the young painter that they gave him a studio right above Michelangelo's "David," in the Galleria dell'Accademia. In 1931, Gassner and his wife returned to New York, and his murals were exhibited in the Brooklyn Museum the following year.

In 1934, Nelson Rockefeller ordered that Diego Rivera's murals for the new RCA Building, which featured a representation of Lenin, be destroyed, and, as the socialist-realist style in painting came to be associated with the Soviet regime, American painting became less political. Because of the changing political and economic climate, Gassner was forced to put his mural project aside in order to make a living. He painted portraits, illustrated textbooks, and helped design sets for the Metropolitan Opera and Hollywood films, and also executed post-office murals for the Federal Arts Project. Gassner lived to the age of ninety-five—he spent the last twenty years of his life in a converted church in Drakes Branch, Virginia—but he never finished the mural series. When he died, in 1995, the wooden crate in which the rolled-up murals had been stored was recovered from the church and placed in a Manhattan Mini Storage warehouse on West Twenty-ninth Street. Last year, Herbert Schlosser, whose wife, Judith, is Gassner's daughter, mentioned the crated murals to his friend David Chang, the president of Polytechnic University. Chang wanted to see them, so the family, together with an art conservator, Leith Talamo, uncrated and examined the works on the warehouse loading dock. "I didn't think that there would be anything left of them," Judith Schlosser said. "But apparently the paper was of extremely high quality and, miraculously, they'd survived."

Chang says he hopes that the murals will remind students of the importance of viewing science within the context of human values. "Our students, whether they're engineers, computer scientists, or chemists, come to us totally focussed on their own field," he said, explaining his decision to mount the murals in the university. "Students can be too one-dimensional. We want them to think about how their work fits into society as a whole. I'm hoping these art works will help remind them of that."

—*John Seabrook*

TASHKENT POSTCARD
BACKHANDS AND BOMBS

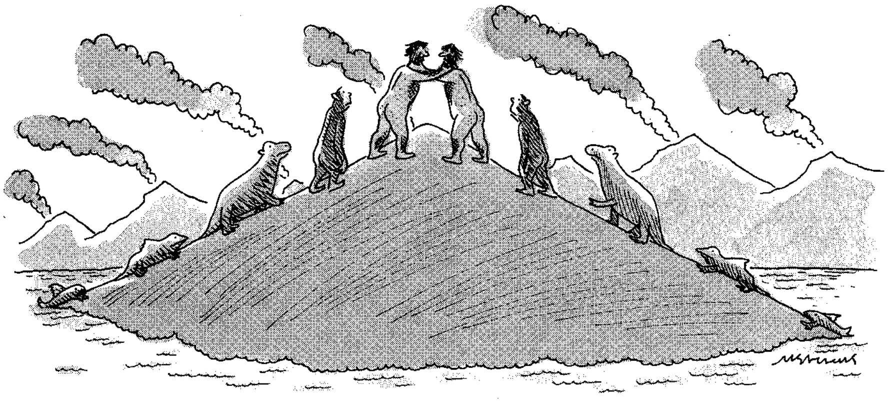


The Yunusabad tennis complex, in Tashkent, is not, strictly speaking, the seat of power in Uzbekistan, but the place does have clout. The complex, which was completed in 1994, is spiffier than Flushing Meadows, and the man behind it, Islam Abduganievich Karimov, is a former Soviet Communist Party boss and the first President (he was elected in 1991) of the independent Republic of Uzbekistan.

Karimov is serious about tennis; it has been said that he practices for several hours a day. In the Tashkent neighborhood where I live, little kids toting tennis racquets half their size can often be seen walking with their parents toward the local courts, which Karimov built. And, despite the poverty and remoteness of the country, he has lured to Uzbekistan a world-class A.T.P.-sanctioned tournament, the President's Cup. "Better tennis racquets than military rockets," Karimov has said.

The terrorist strikes against New York and Washington took place on Day Two of this year's tournament. As the world's major media covered the events in America live, the state-controlled Uzbek TV stayed fixed on Yunusabad's center court; not until the following day were images of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon shown. In the meantime, Karimov prepared his response. On the Sunday after September 11th, at closing ceremonies for the President's Cup, he ordered a minute of silence for America's victims, transforming Yunusabad into the venue for the Uzbek government's most significant public expression of sympathy for the United States.

There was no doubt that Uzbekistan would condemn the terrorist actions and not much surprise that Karimov has lent the United States an airbase, Khanabad. In February, 1999, Tashkent was hit by a series of car bombs, which were thought to be directed at Karimov. Sixteen people died, and scores were injured. Karimov escaped harm because, it is said, he was delayed in arriving at the Cabinet of Ministers building, one of the places attacked. The bombings were Uzbekistan's equivalent of the World Trade Center attack, albeit much smaller in scale. People were outraged and scared. In this country, where Muslims make up nearly ninety per cent of the population, Islamic extremists were blamed, accused of trying to turn Karimov's secular state into another Iran or Afghanistan. The President initiated a security crackdown that is still in effect today.



Human-rights activists estimate that forty thousand policemen now patrol the streets of Tashkent; ten years ago, that number patrolled the entire country. Roadblocks and document checks are common. In the fight against fundamentalism, mosques have been stripped of loudspeakers to mute the public broadcast of the call to prayer, and thousands of Muslims have been jailed for professing their religion in a manner not sanctioned by the state. These measures augment the preëxisting authoritarian order, in which a free press and political opposition were stifled. (In Uzbekistan, the law prohibits public insults of the President.) As for democracy, in the most recent Presidential election, last year, Karimov's nominal rival announced that he had voted for Karimov.

Yet, at least in Tashkent, Karimov remains popular, a benevolent despot—some call him Papa—who secures the social order. "If Islam Abduganievich were removed from power, there would be a fundamentalist government here within six months," a doctor said the other day. "I would happily show my documents ten times a day if that would guarantee peace and stability here," a businessman declared.

The challenge for Karimov, as events in Afghanistan play out, will be to maintain stability. In Tashkent, people worry that the war will spread north to Uzbekistan, and that the Taliban will somehow incite a jihad on Uzbek soil. These are not unreasonable concerns. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, an extremist group bent on overthrowing Karimov, is said by the American government to have links to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network. Karimov blamed the I.M.U. for the 1999 Tashkent bombings, and its forces, which numbered several hundred at the time, clashed with Uzbek troops in the summer of 2000.

Nobody knows just how strong the I.M.U. is, or how much sympathy the group has garnered among Uzbekistan's Muslim population. But Karimov recognizes the threat and the general anxiety about instability and even potential war. The day after American and British forces went into action, Karimov put his foreign-policy advisers on TV to offer the nation reassurance. The advisers said there was no truth to reports that Taliban troops were massing at the Uzbek border. The war in Afghanistan, they said, is a war against terror, not against Islam or the Afghan people. It is a campaign, they maintained, that many Islamic and Arab leaders support, including (of all people) Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. The Uzbek foreign minister noted that Qaddafi "said the U.S. is fully in its right to attack." It was an innovative spin on the American cause.

For now, Karimov's decision to side with the United States seems to have the backing of his people, not least because about a million and a half Uzbeks live in Afghanistan, mainly in the north. A Northern Alliance general, Rashid Dostam, is an ethnic Uzbek and a Karimov partisan. Uzbeks also resent the influx of heroin and opium from Afghanistan. Compounding these sentiments is the memory of a bygone war. "All of central Asia will benefit from eliminating the Taliban," one former soldier, who had fought for the Soviets in Afghanistan, told me angrily. "They need to be destroyed."

—*Robert Rand*

AROUND CITY HALL

THE LONG CAMPAIGN

Mark Green finally wins the Democratic nomination.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

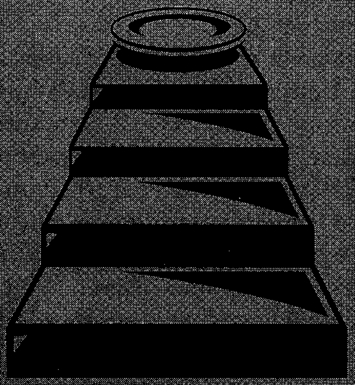
A few minutes before Mark Green came down to address the crowd in the Imperial Ballroom of the Sheraton New York hotel last Thursday, campaign workers began handing out placards with the slogan "Unite to Rebuild." The slogan referred, of course, to the events of September 11th, but Green, the city's public advocate, took it up in another, more immediately relevant sense. "Freddy Ferrer called me an hour ago to congratulate me and concede," he said. "I told him no—I wanted to first say to him congratulations because of his extraordinarily passionate and skillful and effective campaign. He turned out to be an extraordinary leader of idealism, and vision, and eloquence." Then, as if addressing Fernando Ferrer, the Bronx borough president, directly, Green continued, "Your contributions to the city have only just begun. We need you, we need your ideas, and I can't wait till you and your supporters unite with us to win in November.

"I stand before you, awed, honored, and humble, to be the Democratic nominee for mayor," Green went on, turning his attention back to the crowd. He thanked his supporters, took some shots at his Republican opponent, the billionaire Michael Bloomberg—"Now more than ever, New York needs the experience that money can't buy"—and, finally, returned to the theme of unity. "If you want a united New York, which will focus on our common ground and our shared dreams, where everyone has a voice and a seat at City Hall, join our campaign."

Between the fawning and the gloating, the self-promotion and the perfunctory humility, victory celebrations are rarely tasteful affairs. Even so, Green's party last Thursday posed an unusual challenge. The runoff between Green and Ferrer had fallen on the one-month anniversary of the World Trade Center attack and also on the same day that the F.B.I. issued a new terrorism alert. On top of all that, the celebration was only in the narrowest technical sense really about a victory.

Green had entered the runoff with nearly every possible advantage over Ferrer. He had all along been the favorite in the race, and, when the World Trade Center was destroyed, it was assumed, at least by members of the city's white political establishment, that the disaster would trump all other concerns. Green, accordingly, reoriented his entire appeal, adopting the "Unite to Rebuild" slogan and issuing paper after paper on what the city would need to do to recover. Ferrer hardly reacted, and, when he did, what he said often seemed beside the point. He refused to renounce, or even really modify, any of the promises he had made earlier in the campaign, when, seeking to become the city's first Latino mayor, he had run on an appeal to "the other New York." And yet it was the tragedy or, to be more exact, the bathos that followed it that almost cost Green the election. At the party, Green's supporters were swapping stories about how badly he had fared in different office pools, while his own aides joked openly about all the free time they had expected to have after the election. Elizabeth Holtzman, the former city comptroller, addressed the issue perhaps a little too directly when she told the crowd in the ballroom, "It wasn't very long ago that people were writing off Mark Green."

New York's mayoral primary was supposed to have taken place on the very day of the attack, and was cancelled at 10:40 A.M., eleven minutes after the second tower collapsed. By that point, the polls had been open for nearly five hours, enough time for one "wave" of exit polls. The results of that wave, which were never officially released, showed Green comfortably ahead, leading the four-man Democratic field and just two points shy of the forty per cent that he would need to avoid a runoff. By



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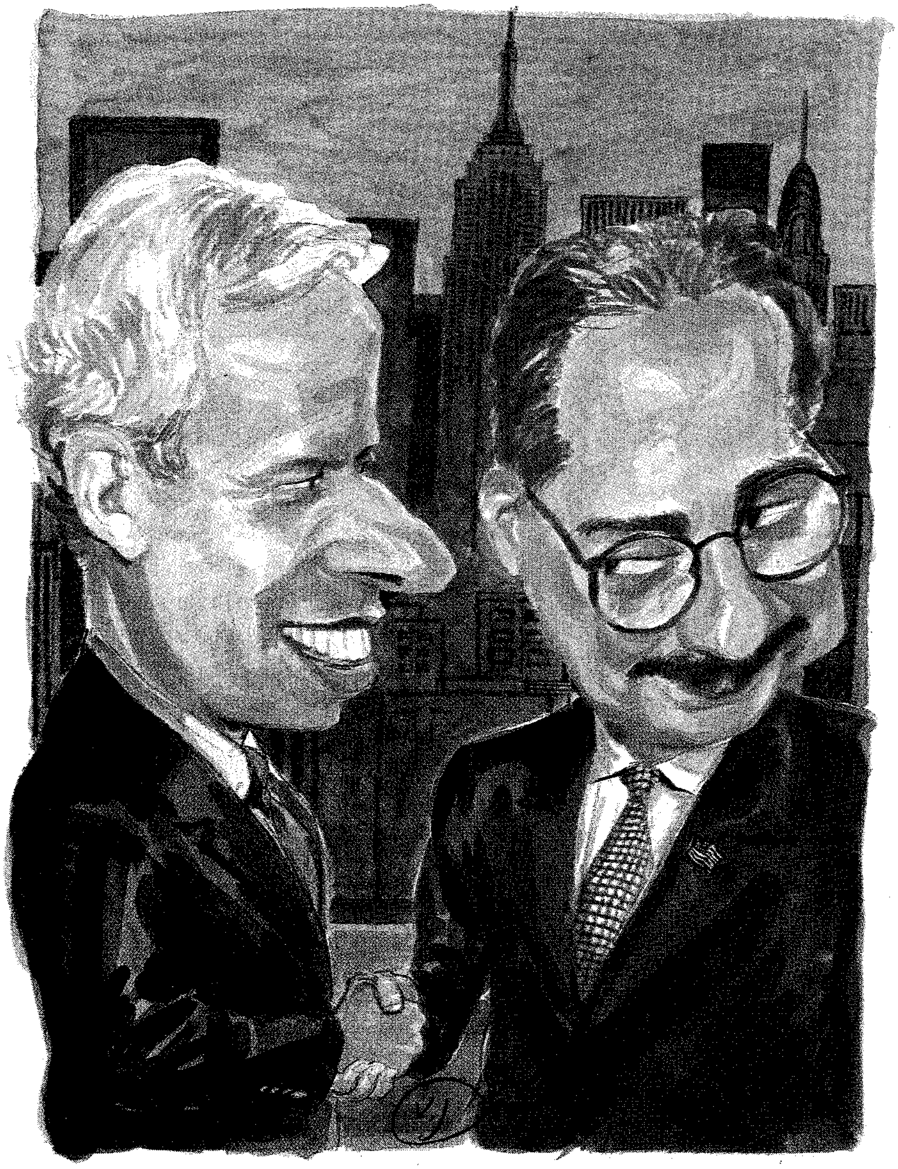
the time the primary, rescheduled for September 25th, had been completed, it was Ferrer who came in first, with thirty-six per cent of the vote, and Green's troubles were just beginning.



The events following the tragedy almost cost Green the race against Ferrer.

VICTOR JUHASZ

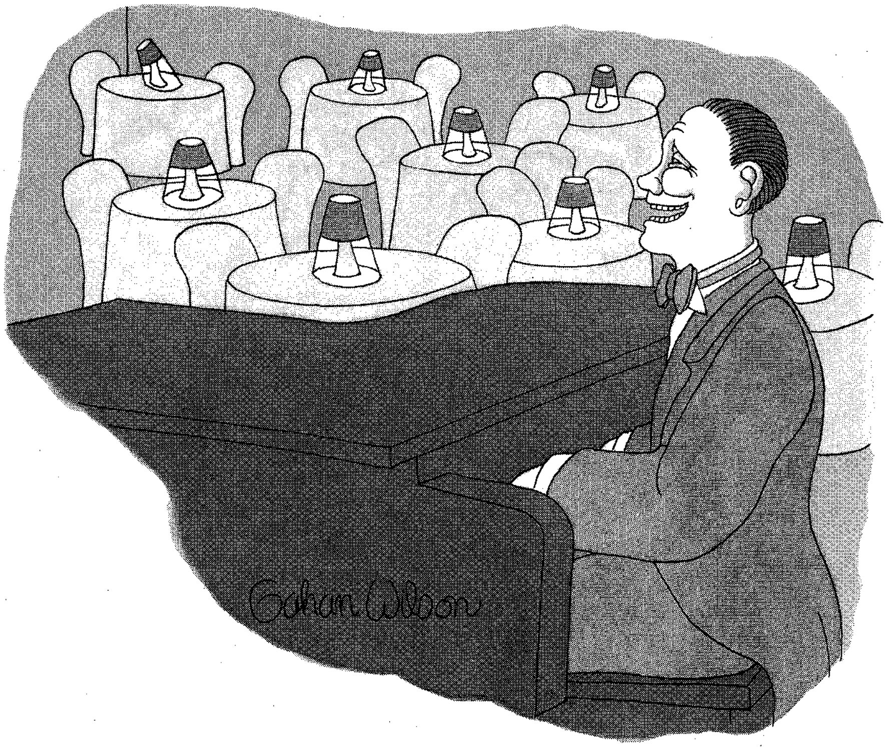
The next day, a few hours before the beginning of Yom Kippur, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani summoned all the mayoral candidates to his command post on the West Side, to issue his so-called "ultimatum." The choice that the Mayor offered the candidates—either they let him stay on for an extra three months or he would run for a third term—was empty of real significance. The candidates had no power to grant his wish, and he had no power to make good on the threat. But this only heightened the purity of the symbolism. Bloomberg, who had just won the Republican nomination, had, all along, been trying to link himself to the Mayor. He leaped at the offer; Giuliani's idea was such a good one, he declared, that the inauguration should be pushed back permanently, from January to April.

Green, too, immediately acquiesced to an extension, ostensibly in the interest of a smooth transition, but clearly also out of fear. Just a day earlier, someone on the Mayor's staff had—ominously—told the *Times* that the public advocate "had not attended enough planning meetings" since the World Trade Center attack, and that he had "fiddled with his Palm Pilot" during one of them. ("Mark doesn't even have a Palm Pilot," one of his aides complained to me. "He has a BlackBerry.") The Mayor himself, meanwhile, when he was asked if the candidates had been "helpful" in the crisis, said darkly, "Some have and some have not."

Ferrer took a day to respond to the Mayor's proposal. Then he rejected it, equating Giuliani's actions with extortion, or—more provocatively—terrorism. "There are pressures that come on you as a candidate, as a public official, or as mayor," he said. "Someone might hold a figurative gun to your head. But, if you can't deal with the pressure at any moment in time, how do you persuade people that you are ready, and that you are up for the challenges of being mayor of the toughest city in America?" After a while, Giuliani publicly dropped the idea of running for a third term, but Ferrer didn't. He kept returning to the theme of courage under fire, at one point, nearly a week after the ultimatum, delivering an entire speech on what it felt like to be tested and found worthy. "None of us knows how we will react under pressure until our moment arrives at its chosen time," Ferrer told his audience—mostly reporters—at the City University Graduate Center. "My time came last Wednesday, in a room with Mayor Giuliani."

Over the years, Green has been accused of many things—stubbornness, arrogance, self-absorption, and runaway liberalism—but shrinking from a fight was not one of them. During his tenure as public advocate, Green spent so much time wrangling with Giuliani that there were many who wondered if he had the time—or the inclination—to do anything else. Ferrer, for his part, enjoyed just the opposite reputation. A product of the Bronx Democratic machine, he belonged, by training and also, apparently, by temperament, to a group given more to dealmaking than to idealism. Just four years ago, when he thought his chances for winning the Democratic mayoral nomination lay in running to the right, Ferrer switched his position on the death penalty and also grumbled about abortion. "Every time a mother hiccups, that's no reason to abort a child," he said.

All this history, however, was immediately forgotten. Green had chosen, for once, not to fight with the Mayor, and this turned out to be the one fight that anyone cared about. Taunted by Ferrer—and watching his African-American support slip away—Green lost heart. (He later told me that the reaction to his decision had broken down almost



"I'd like to dedicate my next song to that delightful little table in the corner with the slightly cockeyed lamp."

• •

entirely along racial lines.) He cycled through one self-defeating rationalization after another, until he finally hit bottom. In an interview on WLIB-AM, Green announced, "I actually believe that if, God forbid, I had been mayor during such a calamity, I would have been as able or better than Mayor Giuliani." The line alienated just about everyone, especially those who had sympathized with his original decision.

Junior's, on Flatbush Avenue in downtown Brooklyn, is an anachronism, a Jewish deli that continues to thrive in a neighborhood that is now almost entirely black. On the Saturday before the October 11th runoff, former Mayor Ed Koch was scheduled to attend a campaign event at the restaurant, and when I got there I found him sitting on a banquette, facing a group of reporters over a table set with bowls of pickles and beets and coleslaw. He was wearing a green windbreaker, a green shirt, and a pair of rumpled chinos.

In the primary, Koch had backed the City Council speaker, Peter Vallone, the most conservative of the four Democratic candidates, whose election effort was based on an unapologetic appeal to white voters in the outer boroughs. Before the primary, Vallone had accused Ferrer of conducting a racially divisive campaign, but the day after it, in one of those moves that make sense only if you give up the notion that they're supposed to, he endorsed him. (Vallone, it was rumored, had been irritated by a call from Green on primary night pressing him, a little too early, to concede.) A few days later, Koch, too, switched over to Ferrer. When I sat down at the table, the former mayor was explaining that he had done this "because Freddy stood up to Giuliani when Mark caved." I asked him whether, beyond that one issue, he agreed with Ferrer's positions. He replied that, in fact, he and Ferrer shared the same political philosophy. "Freddy is a guy who has middle-class values," he said. I tried to pursue this point, noting that Ferrer's campaign was ostensibly based on a different premise entirely.

"But he *is* middle class," Koch replied. "Freddy lives in Riverdale. He has a wonderful view of the Hudson River from his apartment." Finally, somebody asked Koch whether he could point to a fundamental difference between Green and Ferrer. "Mark Green is obnoxious, and Freddy is not," he said cheerfully. "That's a fundamental difference."

After about a quarter of an hour, Koch was joined by his old nemesis the Reverend Al Sharpton. Sharpton, who entered the restaurant talking intently into his cell phone, had on a three-piece suit, black with electric-blue pinstripes. The outfit showed off his new, prison-trimmed physique—he had recently served ninety days for trespassing on United States military property while protesting bombing exercises in Vieques—and Koch greeted him by asking how he was managing to keep off the pounds. "One meal a day and no fried food," Sharpton responded. "I don't want to have to go back to jail to lose it again."

Sharpton had also waited until late in the campaign to endorse Ferrer. It is theoretically possible that the delay reflected real indecision, but just barely. Everyone, including Bloomberg, courted Sharpton while he carried out his deliberations; Green even took the Reverend and his wife to see "Judgment at Nuremberg," which was playing on Broadway last spring. Sharpton's endorsement, at the end of August, was crucial to Ferrer; it finally elevated him to what he had claimed to be all along—the leader of a black-Latino coalition. At the same time, the endorsement represented an obvious opportunity for Green. In the days leading up to the runoff, reporters practically begged him to denounce the Reverend, but Green didn't quite have the will—or the nerve—to do so. The furthest he would go was to insist that he had never sought Sharpton's support, a claim that hardly seemed strong enough to satisfy Sharpton-haters, and that only invited mockery. "I learned one thing from Mark," Sharpton said at Junior's. "From now on, when someone wants my support I'm going to tell him to write it, notarize it, and send it to my lawyer, because I misunderstood. Maybe I had the wrong impression. Maybe I was gullible. But I thought that when he was explaining to me what he would do for the city it was because he wanted my support."

Finally, Ferrer arrived. The group moved out onto the sidewalk in front of the restaurant, Ferrer not quite leading the way. A reporter asked the borough president about his shifting stand on the death penalty, an issue that had been raised by Green that morning. Ferrer's expression grew sorrowful. "Well, you know, I'm sort of troubled by a long memory," he said with a sigh. "Primary night, Mark Green said, 'We're not going to engage in negative campaigning; we will be talking about the future of this city.' And every day he has launched yet another barrage of negative attacks. Now, I thought he was a man of principle. Apparently, he is uncomfortable with the decision he made accepting the Mayor's deal for ninety days and he feels he has to launch these attacks. I think that's sad." Ferrer answered most of the other questions posed to him in a similarly aggrieved tone. "I know that Mark has been, since the election, since he saw that I was ahead of him by about five points in the first round of the primary, concerned about that," he said in response to a question about "the other New York." "He has to launch these negative attacks. I think it's absolutely wrong. I was hoping Mark wouldn't do this."

When the press conference was over, Ferrer and Koch and Sharpton headed down Fulton Street, side by side. The street was crowded with weekend shoppers, and people began to trail after the trio, mostly, it seemed, in order to meet Sharpton. Someone began to chant, "Freddy is ready," and the crowd took up the call. I happened to be standing next to Ferrer at that moment. He turned to me with a faint smile and shrugged. "Who would have thunk it?" he said.

On Columbus Day, with only two days to go before the runoff, and polls showing the race in a dead heat, Green aired what was labelled, accurately, the first negative ad of the mayoral campaign. Aimed at middle-class—mostly white—voters, it questioned Ferrer's competence to run the city in the aftermath of September 11th. The ad lifted, not entirely in context, a phrase from a *Times* editorial, calling Ferrer "borderline irresponsible." Its tag line was "Can we afford to take a chance?"

It is impossible, at this point, to know what the full cost of the World Trade Center attack will be. Recently, the city's comptroller, Alan Hevesi, who himself ran for the Democratic nomination and came in last, issued a report estimating that the total—including everything from the loss of lives, or "human capital," to the bill for Police and Fire Department overtime—would run between ninety billion and a hundred and five billion dollars. Felix Rohatyn, the investment banker who helped save New York from bankruptcy twenty-five years ago, declared last Tuesday that "the city is in greater economic jeopardy today than it was in the fiscal crisis of 1975." That same day, Mayor Giuliani signed an executive order freezing a billion dollars in city spending.

Either Ferrer genuinely didn't appreciate the gravity of the situation—or he simply didn't want to deal with it. His first response was to compare the destruction downtown with the general urban decay he had confronted as borough president; later, he likened the disaster to a long list of others, including the draft riots of 1863, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, in 1911, and the Happy Land Social Club blaze, in 1990. Not until a week after the primary did he address, in any concrete way, the problem of rebuilding, and when he did so there was little more to his plan than a proposal to appoint a "blue-ribbon panel" to consider the matter. And, in spite of the enormous new costs imposed by the attack, Ferrer insisted that he would not back away from commitments he had made earlier in the campaign to spend more on, among other things, teachers' salaries, after-school programs, affordable housing, and parks. Partly as a result of this, he won the endorsement of the city's largest municipal unions, District Council 37, which had previously backed Vallone, and the teachers' union, which had backed Hevesi.

"While it's critical to rebuild our financial center, it's equally critical to rebuild our schools," Ferrer declared. "While it's essential to house the businesses and residents displaced by the events of the past few weeks, it's equally important to house the working families of New York struggling to find an adequate and affordable place to live. The towers of the World Trade Center have crumbled, but our priorities have not." Whenever Green tried to press him on his response to the crisis—or lack thereof—Ferrer fell back on his more-in-sorrow routine. During the second

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debate of the runoff, the two engaged in an exemplary exchange.

"Well, you know, I'm disappointed," Ferrer said. "I had hoped this would be a different kind of campaign, where we'd discuss ideas, and, as Mark put it, be relentlessly focussed on the future of this city. Let's do it in that way. Now, to compare our ideas is fine. To denigrate ideas and say, 'Mine's a big idea' and 'Yours is a little idea,' is not only beside the point, it's frankly apart from what there should be in this debate, Mark."

"It's not beside the point," an obviously frustrated Green shot back. "It *is* the point!"

Last Tuesday, I met up with Green at the entrance to the Utica Avenue subway station, in Crown Heights. It was six o'clock in the evening, and every few minutes a new crowd surged up the stairs. Just about everyone on the street was African-American, except for an occasional band of young Orthodox Jews, on their way to synagogue to celebrate Simchas Torah. Green was, for all his missteps and misfortunes, upbeat. He told me he was convinced that "the tide had turned," and that voters were, finally, attending to the "closing issue," by which he clearly meant the challenges ahead. I asked him why this had taken so long, and he blamed Giuliani.

"After the primary, people were still extremely distracted because of the catastrophe and because of Mayor Giuliani's—um—efforts to either overturn term limits or stay on ninety days longer," he said. "It was only when his efforts stopped, and the public started focussing on which of two Democrats would be the mayor for four or eight years, that the final questions started being asked."

Green stood at the subway station for about forty-five minutes, and during that time he must have greeted four or five hundred people. He had taken off his jacket, and although he described himself as "bone tired," he appeared to have tapped into some reservoir of giddy energy. A middle-aged woman told Green, who is Jewish, that Jesus loved him, and that He was coming soon. A few minutes later, a young man walked by shouting, "Fuck the Jews, fuck the Jews." Neither Green nor anyone else responded. "I need your help on Thursday," Green kept saying as he stuck out his hand. "I need your help on Thursday." One woman asked him about housing, another about education, and a third about whether he could prevent her sons from being deported, but apart from that the only questions people put to him had to do with his response to the Mayor. "I got to tell you something, I was really disappointed that you actually agreed to extend Giuliani's term for ninety days," a man in a business suit told him. I asked Green whether, if he had it to do over again, he would make the same decision. He said yes, but I wasn't sure I believed him.

Strictly speaking, there is probably no way that the election could have lived up to the events of September 11th. The problem was too big, and not just for this set of candidates. As has often been observed, the very circumstances that made the race so important—it may well turn out to be one of the most consequential in the city's history—also tended, inevitably, to obscure it. The final debate of the runoff was held less than an hour before the United States began bombing Afghanistan. And, on the evening of the contest, televisions all over the city were tuned to the President's prime-time news conference.

Still, it would be wrong to say that the campaign settled nothing, or even, as Green put it, that it got sidetracked. For all its speciousness, triviality, and embarrassing antics—at one point, the Green campaign actually hired an acrobat to do flips as a metaphor for Ferrer's ideological inconstancy—this race turned on the same questions that New York City elections almost always do. The campaign's theatrics came just close enough to the real issues to be accepted as proxies for them; ultimately, it was a contest about race, about how to divvy up limited public resources, and about attitudes toward authority. In the end, Green beat Ferrer fifty-two per cent to forty-eight; he won only because whites are still the largest group in the city electorate and they supported him by a margin of five to one. As the talk about rebuilding gives way to the costly business of doing so, the divisions that have—once again—been exposed seem likely only to widen. ♦

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LOWERING MY STANDARDS

BY JACK HANDEY

As you may have heard, I have very high standards. When people see me do something, they often shake their heads in disbelief. That's how high my standards are.

But lately I've been wondering if maybe they're not *too* high. Am I pushing myself too hard? Do I always have to be the one that everybody looks up to? Are my high standards hurting my happiness and things like that?

Why, for instance, do I always have to be the first one to show up at a party and the last one to leave? And, while I'm at the party, is it really so important that I tell the dirtiest joke? A lot of times, I'm the only one telling a dirty joke, so it's not even that big an accomplishment. And, if someone else does tell a dirty joke, why do I feel compelled to tell one that is even dirtier and more graphic? Just so I can be No. 1?

Why do I sometimes feel like I should get "a job," or do some kind of "work"? Does thinking about maybe getting a job make me better than other people? Am I worried that if I quit borrowing money from my friends they'll think I'm stuck-up?

Why do I have to be the honest one? Do people really want you to be that honest about how old they look or how big their breasts are?

When I catch my foot and stumble on the sidewalk, why do I have to pretend to keep stumbling, all the way down the street? To avoid embarrassment?

At every get-together, why do I have to do my funny cowboy dance? Why not do a dance that isn't so demanding, like my funny robot dance, or just funny prancing?

Is it really my responsibility that half-empty glasses of beer not be wasted?

Whenever there's a scary sound at night, why do I have to do all the screaming? Maybe somebody else can scream and cry and beg for mercy, for a change.

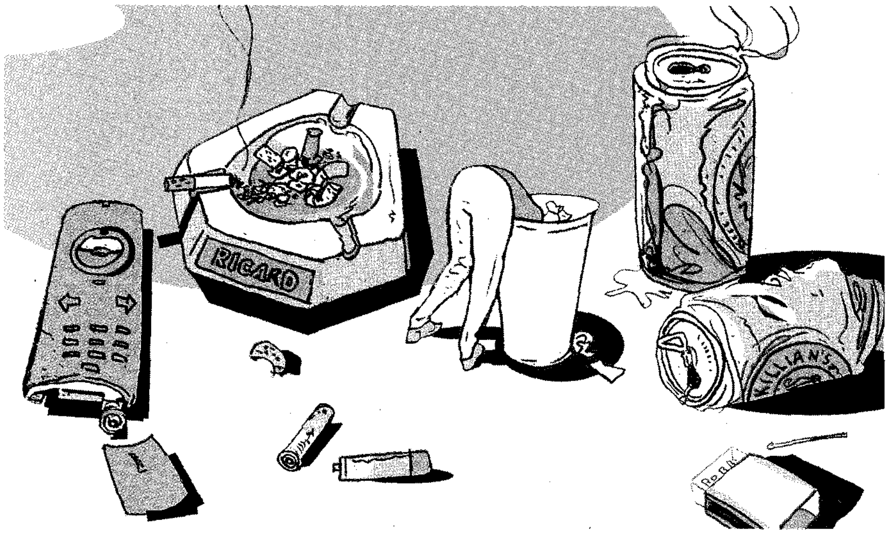
Would the world really fall apart if I didn't point out to people which are the regular goldfish and which are the bug-eyed ones? Let them figure it out on their own.

Why does it have to be me who ends up asking how much someone paid for something? *Everyone* is curious.

Could a sock really be a parachute for a mouse? Maybe not, but does that mean I have to stand up in the middle of the movie theatre and start booing?

Why do I always have to be the one who sums up what was just said, or explains to the children what Hell is, or calls the meeting to order?

These are all questions I would never even have asked myself until that incident with Don. Every day, my friend Don and I would see who could trip each other the most times. But then one day I tripped him and he fell and broke his jaw. He looked up and, with slurred speech, said, "I guess you win." But what did I win? I didn't win anything, and you know why? Because I forgot to make a bet with him. But something else was wrong, and I knew it. Why did I want to trip Don in the first place? To show how clever I was, or how brave, or how successful? Yes, all those things. So I guess that answers that.



ISTVAN BANYAI

Still, something about it bothered me. I decided to drive up to a cabin in the mountains. For a week, all I did was sit and think and watch a lot of television. How, I agonized during the commercial breaks, did I get such high standards? Was it something from my childhood, or my fraternity-hood? Was it from another lifetime, when I was in another fraternity? I wondered if my high standards were leading me to a heart attack. Then I thought, Yes, but it'll be the biggest heart attack anyone's ever had. I wondered if it was even possible for a person like me to lower his standards. Then I wondered if they still make Bosco. I became so confused and frustrated I began smashing things in the cabin. I wound up running headlong into the woods in a panic when the people who owned the cabin suddenly showed up.

As I drove back to civilization (as you squares call it), I had already made a momentous decision: I would keep thinking about the possibility of lowering my standards. Maybe, just maybe, I don't always have to be the best. Maybe I don't need to always be the first one to point and laugh. Maybe when I ask someone a question I don't always have to begin it with the words "Pray tell." Perhaps I don't have to wear the fanciest fanny pack that money can buy. And when I'm at a dinner party maybe I don't need to sniff every piece of food before I eat it. In short, perhaps I should worry less about doing the right thing and more about doing the right *thang*, whatever that means.

People may worry, "Isn't there a danger that if you start lowering your standards they'll go too low?" As far as I'm concerned, they can't go low enough. ♦

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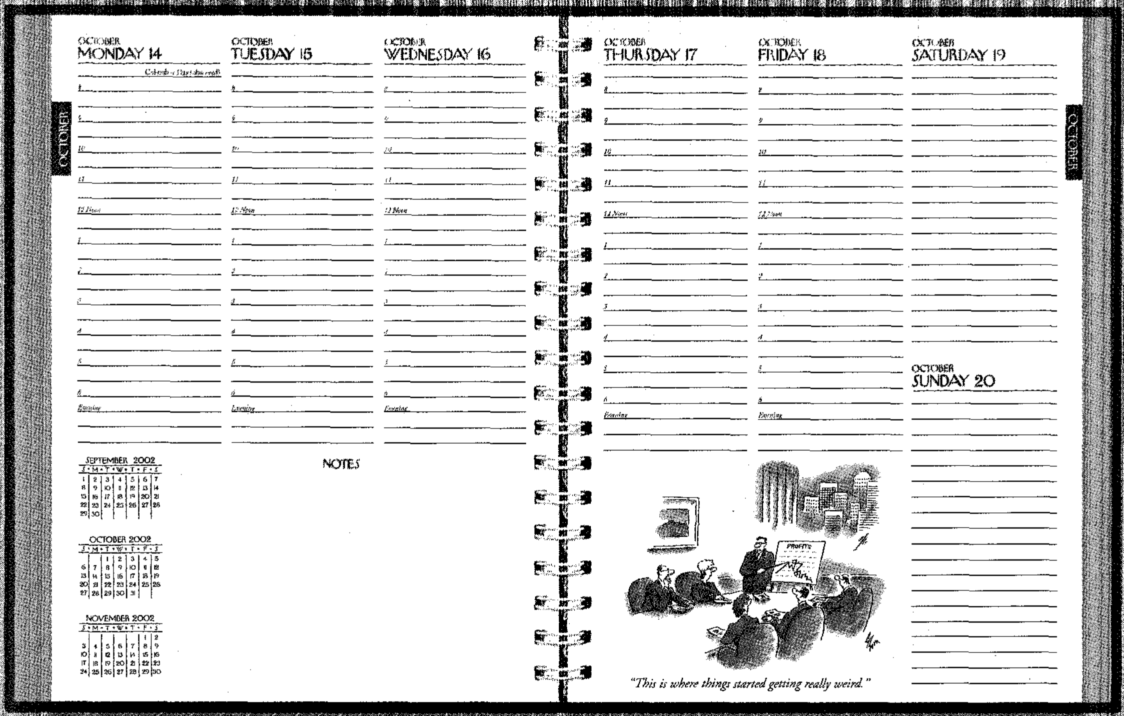
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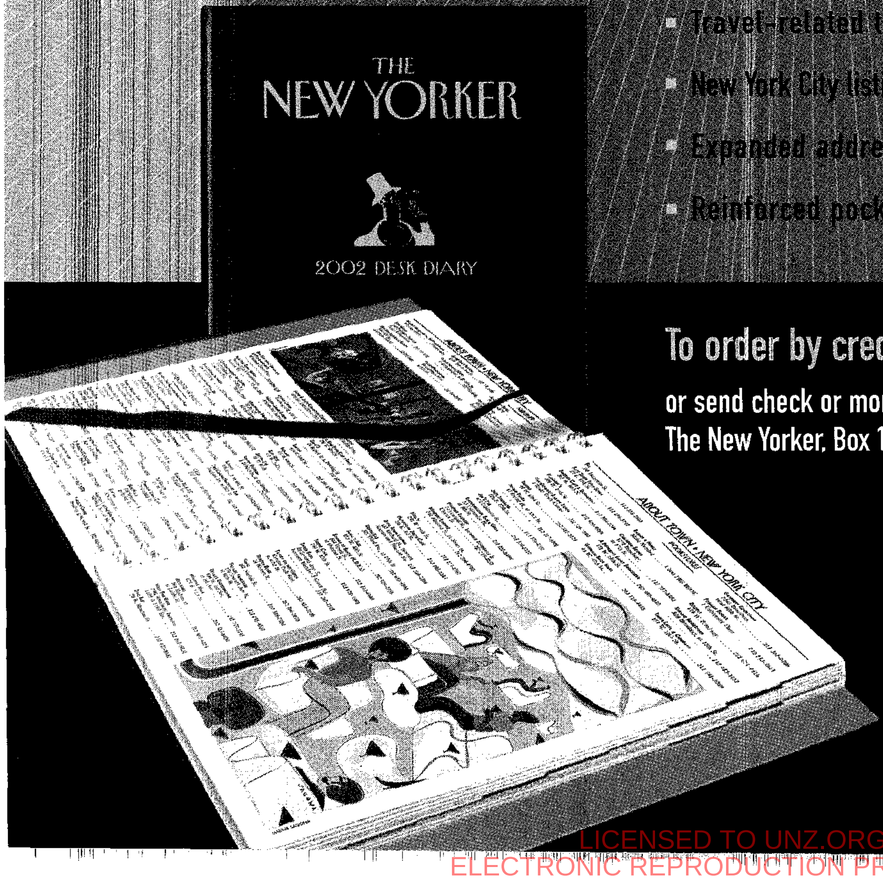
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ANNALS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

KING'S RANSOM

How vulnerable are the Saudi royals?

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

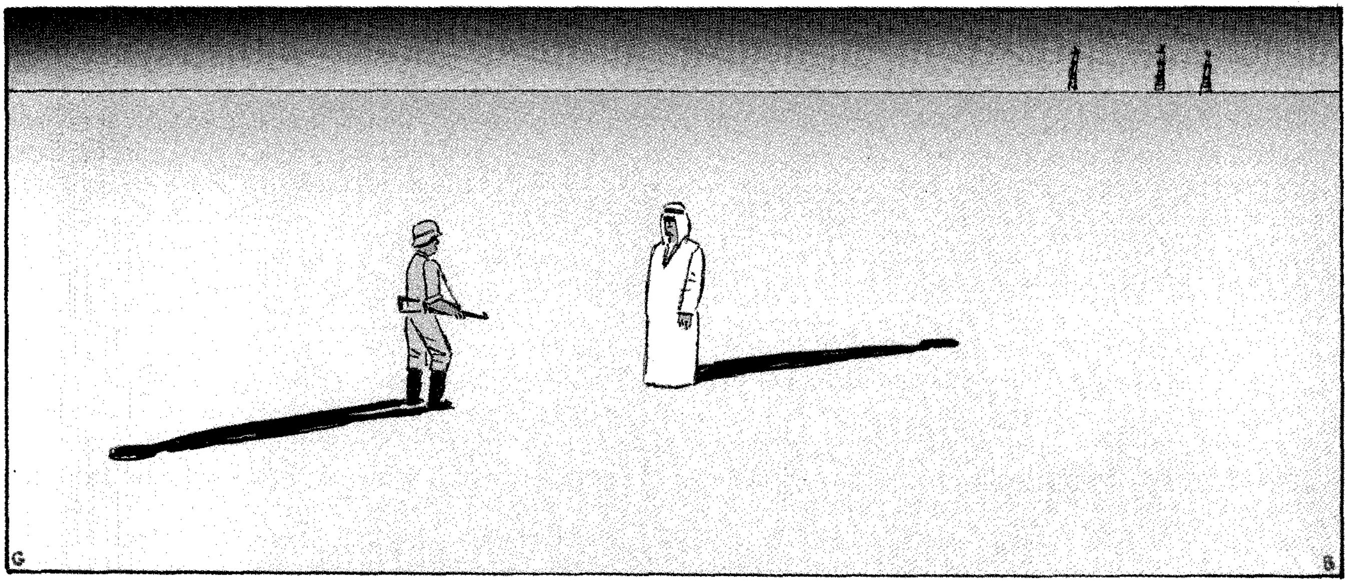
Since 1994 or earlier, the National Security Agency has been collecting electronic intercepts of conversations between members of the Saudi Arabian royal family, which is headed by King Fahd. The intercepts depict a regime increasingly corrupt, alienated from the country's religious rank and file, and so weakened and frightened that it has brokered its future by channelling hundreds of millions of dollars in what amounts to protection money to fundamentalist groups that wish to overthrow it.

The intercepts have demonstrated to analysts that by 1996 Saudi money was supporting Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda and other extremist groups in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Yemen, and Central Asia, and throughout the Persian Gulf region. "Ninety-six is the key year," one American intelligence official told me. "Bin Laden hooked up to all the bad guys—it's like the Grand Alliance—and had a capability for conducting large-scale operations." The Saudi regime, he said, had "gone to the dark side."

In interviews last week, current and former intelligence and military officials portrayed the growing instability of the Saudi regime—and the vulnerability of its oil reserves to terrorist attack—as the most immediate threat to American economic and political interests in the Middle East. The officials also said that the Bush Administration, like the Clinton Administration, is refusing to confront this reality, even in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

The Saudis and the Americans arranged a meeting between Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and King Fahd during a visit by Rumsfeld to Saudi Arabia shortly before the beginning of the air war in Afghanistan, and pictures of the meeting were transmitted around the world. The United States, however, has known that King Fahd has been incapacitated since suffering a severe stroke, in late 1995. A Saudi adviser told me last week that the King, with round-the-clock medical treatment, is able to sit in a chair and open his eyes, but is usually unable to recognize even his oldest friends. Fahd is being kept on the throne, the N.S.A. intercepts indicate, because of a bitter family power struggle. Fahd's nominal successor is Crown Prince Abdullah, his half brother, who is to some extent the de-facto ruler—he and Prince Sultan, the defense minister, were the people Rumsfeld really came to see. But there is infighting about money: Abdullah has been urging his fellow-princes to address the problem of corruption in the kingdom—unsuccessfully, according to the intercepts. "The only reason Fahd's being kept alive is so Abdullah can't become king," a former White House adviser told me.

The American intelligence officials have been particularly angered by the refusal of the Saudis to help the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. run "traces"—that is, name checks and other background information—on the nineteen men, more than half of them believed to be from Saudi Arabia, who took part in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. "They knew that once we started asking for a few traces the list would grow," one former official said. "It's better to shut it down right away." He pointed out that thousands of disaffected Saudis have joined fundamentalist groups throughout the Middle East. Other officials said that there is a growing worry inside the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. that the actual identities of many of those involved in the attacks may not be known definitively for months, if ever. Last week, a senior intelligence official confirmed the lack of Saudi coöperation and told me, angrily, that



Intercepts of the princes' conversations tell much about the royal family's hypocrisy and its increasing alienation from its subjects.

GUY BILLOUT

the Saudis "have only one constant—and it's keeping themselves in power."

WHEATEAR

Poem beginning with a line of J. M. Synge.

Brown lark beside the sun
Supervising Carrigskeewaun
In late May, marsh marigolds
And yellow flags, trout at the low
Bridge hesitating, even
The ravens' ramshackle nest—
Applaud yourself, applaud me
As I find inside the cottage
A wheatear from Africa
Banging against the windowpane
And hold in my hands her creamy-
Buff underparts and white rump
And carry her to the door
And she joins you beside the sun
Before skimming across the dunes
To mimic a rabbit hole
Among silverweed and speedwell
My panic, my breathlessness.

—Michael Longley

The N.S.A. intercepts reveal the hypocrisy of many in the Saudi royal family, and why the family has become increasingly estranged from the vast majority of its subjects. Over the years, unnerved by the growing strength of the fundamentalist movement, it has failed to deal with the underlying issues of severe unemployment and inadequate education, in a country in which half the population is under the age of eighteen. Saudi Arabia's strict interpretation of Islam, known as Wahhabism, and its use of *mutawwa'in*—religious police—to enforce prayer, is rivalled only by the Taliban's. And yet for years the Saudi princes—there are thousands of them—have kept tabloid newspapers filled with accounts of their drinking binges and partying with prostitutes, while taking billions of dollars from the state budget. The N.S.A. intercepts are more specific. In one call, Prince Nayef, who has served for more than two decades as interior minister, urges a subordinate to withhold from the police evidence of the hiring of prostitutes, presumably by members of the royal family. According to the summary, Nayef said that he didn't want the "client list" released under any circumstances.

The intercepts produced a stream of sometimes humdrum but often riveting intelligence from the telephone calls of several senior members of the royal family, including Abdullah; Nayef; Sultan, whose son Prince Bandar has been the Saudi ambassador to the United States since 1983; and Prince Salman, the governor of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's capital. There was constant telephoning about King Fahd's health after his stroke, and scrambling to take advantage of the situation. On January 8, 1997, Prince Sultan told Bandar about a flight that he and Salman had shared with the King. Sultan complained that the King "barely spoke to anyone," according to the summary of the intercept, because he was "too medicated." The King, Sultan added, was "a prisoner on the plane."

Sultan's comments became much more significant a few days later, when the N.S.A. intercepted a conversation in which Sultan told Bandar that the King had agreed to a complicated exchange of fighter aircraft with the United States that would bring five F-16s into the Royal Saudi Air Force. Fahd was evidently incapable of making such an agreement, or of preventing anyone from dropping his name in a money-making deal.

In the intercepts, princes talk openly about bilking the state, and even argue about what is an acceptable percentage to take. Other calls indicate that Prince Bandar, while serving as ambassador, was involved in arms deals in London, Yemen, and the Soviet Union that generated millions of dollars in "commissions." In a PBS "Frontline" interview broadcast on October 9th, Bandar, asked about the reports of corruption in the royal family, was almost upbeat in his response. The family had spent nearly four hundred billion dollars to develop Saudi Arabia, he said. "If you tell me that building this whole country . . . we misused or got corrupted with fifty billion, I'll tell you, 'Yes.' . . . So what? We did not invent corruption, nor did those dissidents, who are so genius, discover it."

The intercepts make clear, however, that Crown Prince Abdullah was insistent on stemming the corruption. In November of 1996, for example, he complained about the billions of dollars that were being diverted by royal family members from a huge state-financed project to renovate the mosque in Mecca. He urged the princes to get their off-budget expenses under control; such expenses are known as the hiding place for payoff money. (Despite its oil revenues, Saudi Arabia has been running a budget deficit for more than a decade, and now has a large national debt.) A few months later, according to the intercepts, Abdullah blocked a series of real-estate deals by one of the princes, enraging members of the royal family. Abdullah further alarmed the princes by issuing a decree declaring that his sons would not be permitted to go into partnerships with foreign companies working in the kingdom.

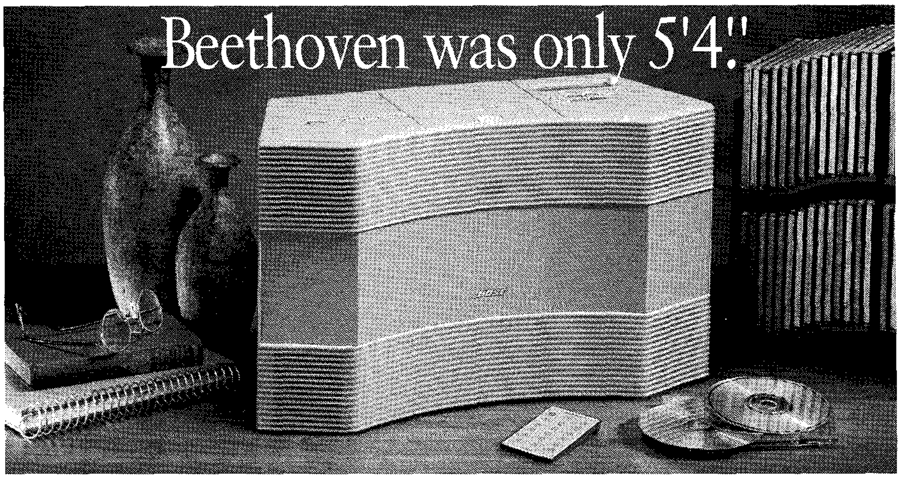
Abdullah is viewed by Sultan and other opponents as a leader who could jeopardize the kingdom's most special foreign relationship—someone who is willing to penalize the United States, and its oil and gas companies, because of Washington's support for Israel. In an intercept dated July 13, 1997, Prince Sultan called Bandar in Washington, and informed him that he had told Abdullah "not to be so confrontational with the United States."

The Fahd regime was a major financial backer of the Reagan Administration's anti-Communist campaign in Latin America and of its successful proxy war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. Oil money bought the Saudis enormous political access and leverage in Washington. Working through Prince Bandar, they have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to charities and educational programs here. American construction and oil companies do billions of dollars' worth of business every year with Saudi Arabia, which is the world's largest oil producer. At the end of last year, Halliburton, the Texas-based oil-supply business formerly headed by Vice-President Dick Cheney, was operating a number of subsidiaries in Saudi Arabia.

In the Clinton era, the White House did business as usual with the Saudis, urging them to buy American goods, like Boeing aircraft. The kingdom was seen as an American advocate among the oil-producing nations of the Middle East. The C.I.A. was discouraged from conducting any risky intelligence operations inside the country and, according to one former official, did little recruiting among the Saudi population, which limited the United States government's knowledge of the growth of the opposition to the royal family.

In 1994, Mohammed al-Khilewi, the first secretary at the Saudi Mission to the United Nations, defected and sought political asylum in the United States. He brought with him, according to his New York lawyer, Michael J. Wildes, some fourteen thousand internal government documents depicting the Saudi royal family's corruption, human-rights abuses, and financial support for terrorists. He claimed to have evidence that the Saudis had given financial and technical support to Hamas, the extremist Islamic group whose target is Israel. There was a meeting at the lawyer's office with two F.B.I. agents and an Assistant United States Attorney. "We gave them a sampling of the documents and put them on the table," Wildes told me last week. "But the agents refused to accept them." He and his client heard nothing further from federal authorities. Al-Khilewi, who was granted asylum, is now living under cover.

The Saudis were also shielded from Washington's foreign-policy bureaucracy. A government expert on Saudi af-



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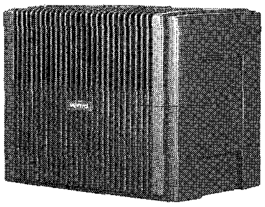

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fairs told me that Prince Bandar dealt exclusively with the men at the top, and never met with desk officers and the like. "Only a tiny handful of people inside the government are familiar with U.S.-Saudi relations," he explained. "And that is purposeful."

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the royal family has repeatedly insisted that Saudi Arabia has made no contributions to radical Islamic groups. When the Saudis were confronted by press reports that some of the substantial funds that the monarchy routinely gives to Islamic charities may actually have gone to Al Qaeda and other terrorist networks, they denied any knowledge of such transfers. The intercepts, however, have led many in the intelligence community to conclude otherwise.

The Bush Administration has chosen not to confront the Saudi leadership over its financial support of terror organizations and its refusal to help in the investigation. "As far as the Saudi Arabians go, they've been nothing but coöperative," President Bush said at a news conference on September 24th. The following day, the Saudis agreed to formally cut off diplomatic relations with the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan. Eight days later, at a news conference in Saudi Arabia with Prince Sultan, the defense minister, Donald Rumsfeld was asked if he had given the Saudis a list of the September 11th terrorist suspects for processing by their intelligence agencies. Rumsfeld, who is admired by many in the press for his bluntness, answered evasively: "I am, as I said, not involved with the Federal Bureau of Investigation that is conducting the investigation. . . . I have every reason to believe that that relationship between our two countries is as close, that any information I am sure has been made available to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

The Saudis gave Rumsfeld something in return—permission for U.S. forces to use a command-and-control center, built before the Gulf War, in the pending air war against the Taliban. Over the past few years, the Saudis have also allowed the United States to use forward bases on Saudi soil for special operations, as long as there was no public mention of the arrangements.

While the intelligence-community members I spoke with praised the Air Force and the Navy for their performance in Afghanistan last week, which did much to boost morale in the military and among the American citizenry, they were crestfallen about an incident that occurred on the first night of the war—an incident that was emblematic, they believe, of the constraints placed by the government on the military's ability to wage war during the last decade.

That night, an unmanned Predator reconnaissance aircraft, under the control of the C.I.A., was surveilling the roads leading out of Kabul. The Predator, which costs forty million dollars and cruises at speeds as slow as eighty miles an hour, is equipped with imaging radar and an array of infrared and television cameras that are capable of beaming high-resolution images to ground stations around the world. The plane was equipped with two powerful Hellfire missiles, designed as antitank weapons. The Predator identified a group of cars and trucks fleeing the capital as a convoy carrying Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader. Under a previously worked-out agreement, one knowledgeable official said, the C.I.A. did not have the authority to "push the button." Nor did the nearby command-and-control suite of the Fifth Fleet, in Bahrain, where many of the war plans had been drawn up. Rather, the decision had to be made by the officers on duty at the headquarters of the United States Central Command, or CENTCOM, at MacDill Air Force Base, in Florida.

The Predator tracked the convoy to a building where Omar, accompanied by a hundred or so guards and soldiers, took cover. The precise sequence of events could not be fully learned, but intelligence officials told me that there was an immediate request for a full-scale assault by fighter bombers. At that point, however, word came from General Tommy R. Franks, the CENTCOM commander, saying, as the officials put it, "My JAG"—Judge Advocate General, a legal officer—"doesn't like this, so we're not going to fire." Instead, the Predator was authorized to fire a missile in front of the building—"bounce it off the front door," one officer said, "and see who comes out, and take a picture." CENTCOM suggested that the Predator then continue to follow Omar. The Hellfire, however, could not target the area in front of the building—in military parlance, it could not "get a signature" on the dirt there—and it was then agreed that the missile would attack a group of cars parked in front, presumably those which had carried Omar and his retinue. The missile was fired, and it "obliterated the cars," an official said. "But no one came out."

It was learned later from an operative on the ground that Omar and his guards had indeed been in the convoy and had assumed at the time that the firing came from rocket-propelled grenades launched by nearby troops from the Northern Alliance. A group of soldiers left the building and looked for the enemy. They found nothing, and Omar and his convoy departed. A short time later, the building was targeted and destroyed by F-18s. Mullah Omar survived.

Days afterward, top Administration officials were still seething about the incident. "If it was a fuckup, I could live with it," one senior official said. "But it's not a fuckup—it's an outrage. This isn't like you're six years old and your mother calls you to come in for lunch and you say, 'Time out.' If anyone thinks otherwise, go look at the World Trade Center or the Pentagon." A senior military officer viewed the failure to strike immediately as a symptom of "a cultural issue"—"a slow degradation of the system due to political correctness: 'We want you to kill the guy, but not the guy next to him.' No collateral damage." Others saw the cultural problem as one of bureaucratic, rather than political, correctness. Either way, the failure to attack has left Defense Secretary Rumsfeld "kicking a lot of glass and breaking doors," the officer said. "But in the end I don't know if it'll mean any changes."

A Pentagon planner also noted that some of the camps the bombers were hitting were empty. In fact, he added, it became evident even before the bombing that troops of the Northern Alliance had moved into many of the unused Taliban camps. The Alliance soldiers came up with a novel way of alerting American planners to their new location, the officer said: "They walked around holding up white sheets so when the satellites came by they're saying, 'Hey, we're the good guys.' "

The American military response has triggered alarm in the international oil community and among intelligence officials who have been briefed on a still secret C.I.A. study, put together in the mid-eighties, of the vulnerability of the Saudi fields to terrorist attack. The report was "so sensitive," a former C.I.A. officer told me, "that it was put on typed paper," and not into the agency's computer system, meaning that distribution was limited to a select few. According to someone who saw the report, it concluded that with only a small amount of explosives terrorists could take the oil fields off line for two years.

The concerns, both in America and in Saudi Arabia, about the security of the fields have become more urgent than ever since September 11th. A former high-level intelligence official depicted the Saudi rulers as nervously "sitting on a keg of dynamite"—that is, the oil reserves. "They're petrified that somebody's going to light the fuse."

"The United States is hostage to the stability of the Saudi system," a prominent Middle Eastern oil man, who did not wish to be cited by name, told me in a recent interview. "It's time to start facing the truth. The war was declared by bin Laden, but there are thousands of bin Ladens. They are setting the game—the agenda. It's a new form of war. This fabulous military machine you have is completely useless." The oil man, who has worked closely with the Saudi leadership for three decades, added, "People like me have been deceiving you. We talk about how you don't understand Islam, but it's a vanilla analysis. We try to please you, but we've been aggrieved for years."

The Saudi regime "will explode in time," he said. "It has been playing a delicate game." As for the terrorists responsible for the September 11th attacks, he said, "Now they decide the timing. If they do a similar operation in Saudi Arabia, the price of oil will go up to one hundred dollars a barrel"—more than four times what it is today.

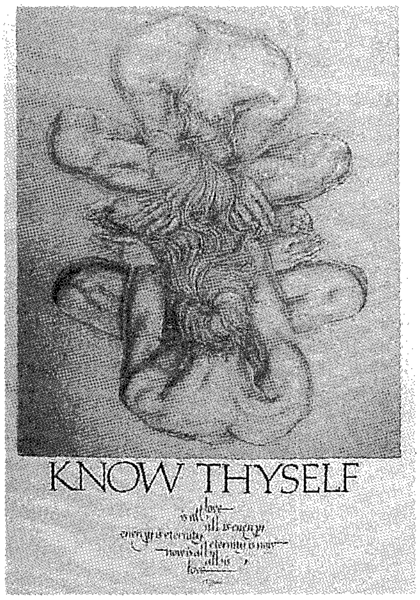
In the nineteen-eighties, in an effort to relieve political pressure on the regime, the Saudi leadership relinquished some of its authority to the *mutawwa'in* and permitted them to have a greater role in day-to-day life. One U.S. government Saudi expert complained last week that religious leaders had been allowed to take control of the press and the educational system. "Today, two-thirds of the Saudi Ph.D.s are in Islamic studies," a former Presidential aide told me. There was little attempt over the years by American diplomats or the White House to moderate the increasingly harsh rhetoric about the U.S. "The United States was caught up in private agreements"—with the Saudi princes—"while this shit was spewing in the Saudi press," the former aide said. "That was a huge mistake."

A senior American diplomat who served many years in Saudi Arabia recalled his foreboding upon attending a training exercise at the kingdom's most prestigious military academy, in Riyadh: "It was hot, and I watched the cadets doing drills. The officers were lounging inside a *suradiq*"—a large pavilion—"with cold drinks, calling out orders on loudspeakers. I thought to myself, How many of these young men would follow and die for these officers?" The diplomat said he came away from his most recent tour in Saudi Arabia convinced that "it wouldn't take too much for a group of twenty or thirty fundamentalist enlisted men to take charge. How would the kingdom deal with the shock of something ruthless, small, highly motivated, and of great velocity?"

There is little that the United States can do now, the diplomat said. "The Saudis have been indulged for so many decades. They are so spoiled. They've always had it their way. There's hardly anything we could say that would impede the 'majestic instancy' of their progress. We're their janissaries." He was referring to the captives who became élite troops of the Ottoman Empire.

"The policy dilemma is this," a senior general told me. "How do we help the Saudis make a transition without throwing them over the side?" Referring to young fundamentalists who have been demonstrating in the Saudi streets, he said, "The kids are bigger than the Daddy." ♦

A POSTER FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM



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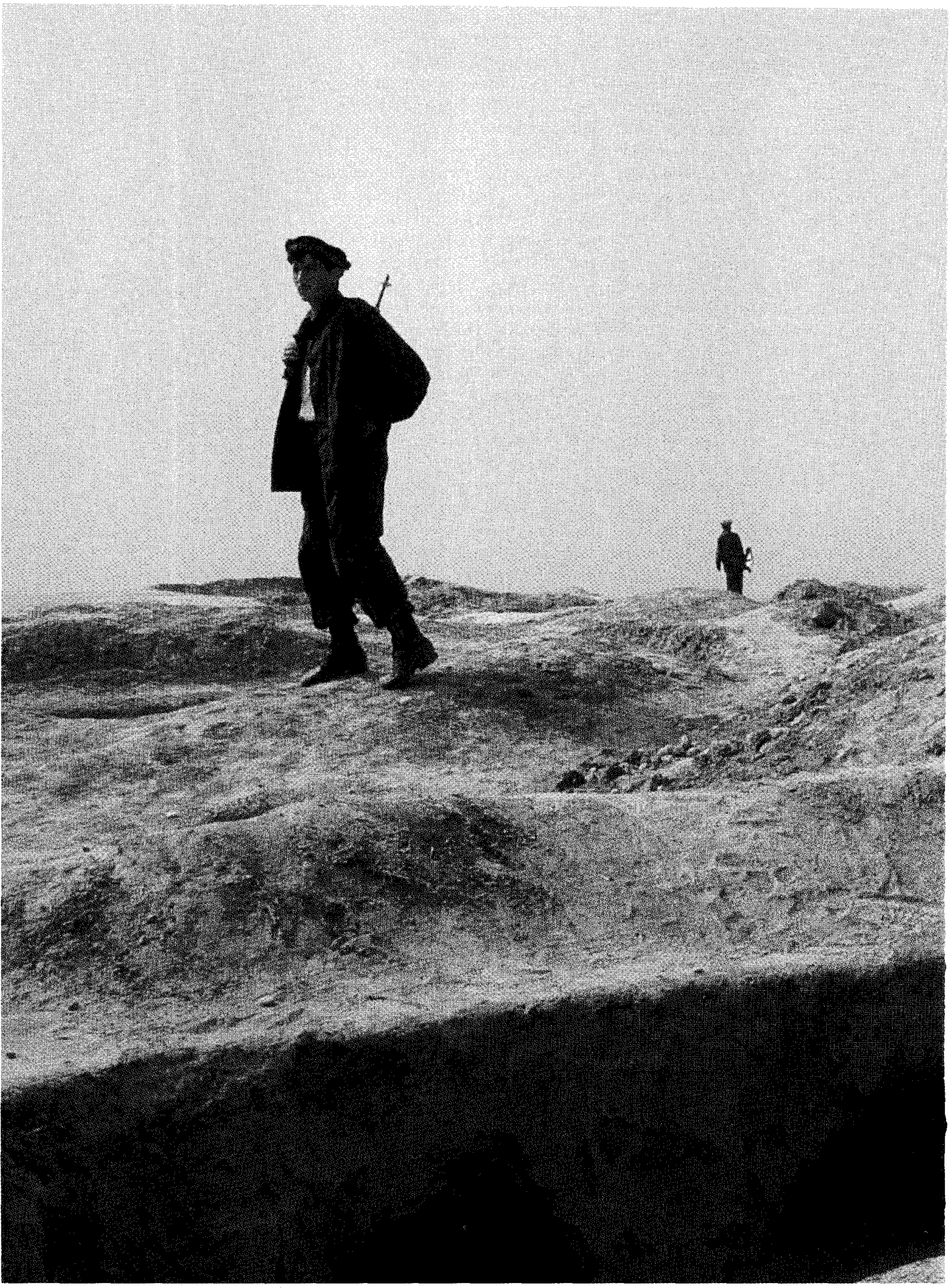


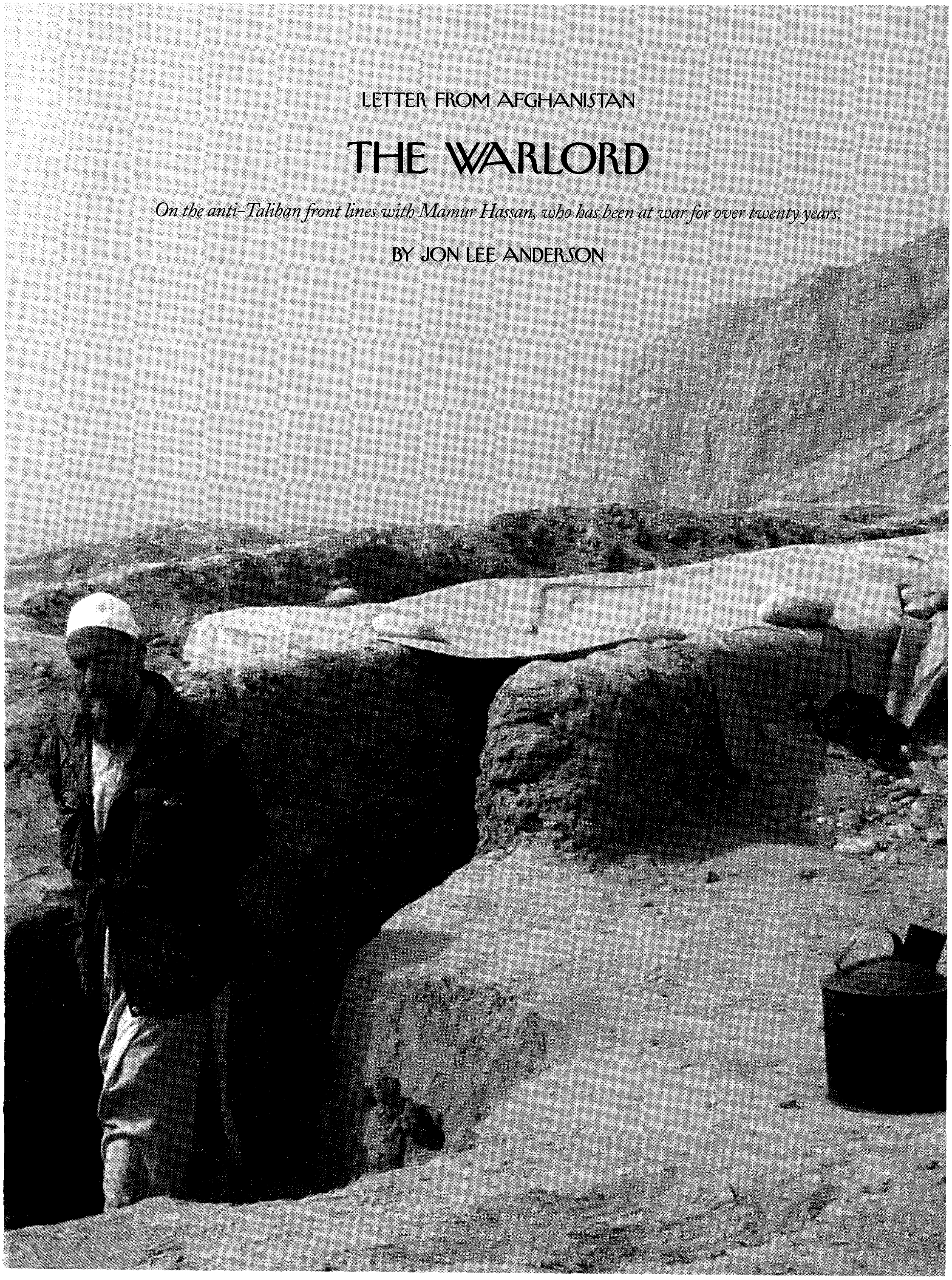
Mamur Hassan, a Northern Alliance commander in a remote desert region near the Tajikistan border, inspects his troops on a hill overlookin

LETTER FROM AFGHANISTAN

THE WARLORD

On the anti-Taliban front lines with Mamur Hassan, who has been at war for over twenty years.

BY JON LEE ANDERSON



he Amu Dar’ya River, one of the main transit points for getting supplies from the outside world. Photographs by Thomas Dworzak.

A few days before the American and British air strikes in Afghanistan began, I visited a man who is being held prisoner in a hole in the desert. The hole is near Dasht-e-Qala, a northern Afghan town a few miles from the Tajikistan border, not far from a hogback ridge of dusty hills that the Taliban have, for some time, been trying to wrest from their main opponents, the Northern Alliance. The Taliban and the Northern Alliance fighters had come to within three hundred yards of one another in places, and on the exposed ridges, where the powdery earth was a grim geometry of sandbagged dugouts and trenches, they traded shots with sniper rifles and heavy machine guns, while their rearguard positions lobbed tank shells back and forth.

The prisoner, a Taliban fighter who says his name is Bashir, had been in the hole for about a month, since the night he was caught by the Northern Alliance mujahideen wandering around on his own in no man's land. His hole-prison is about ten feet deep and three feet wide, and it is covered most of the time by a piece of heavy metal tread from a Russian tank. At the bottom, the hole turns into a cavity that, according to his captors, is a comfortable six feet by six feet. When Bashir is brought up to ground level, he has to climb a wooden ladder. This is a not an easy thing to do, because he also wears leg irons.

On the day I met Bashir, or, rather, observed him—for he was in a trancelike state of detachment—his leg irons had been removed. He was forced to walk over to where I stood, but he appeared to be weak, and he soon squatted down against a mud wall. He is about thirty, very thin, with a black goatee and short-cropped black hair. He wore a filthy green smock and his skin was smeared with dirt. His arms were tattooed with green dots, and there was a string around his neck from which hung a little purple book containing verses from the Koran. He was barefoot. His captors said that he has needle tracks on his arms, although I didn't see them. I did see a scar from a bullet hole on his right collarbone.

A group of mujahideen guards and curious children gathered to watch. Despite promptings from Mullah Omar, the warlord who is holding Bashir and wants to exchange him for five of his own soldiers who are being held prisoner by the Taliban, he didn't say very much—just his name, and that he is from Kandahar, more than four hundred miles to the southwest, where the Taliban have their headquarters. (And where the better-known Mullah Omar, the head of the Taliban, lives. Many Afghans use only one name, which can be confusing to Westerners.) "All the Kandaharis are like this," Mullah Omar said to me. "They never talk." They were not to be trusted, he said, which was why Bashir had to be kept in a hole. Mullah Omar is a slight, thirty-five-year-old man of Tajik ancestry. He said that the Taliban had offered him only three of his soldiers in exchange for Bashir, and that he and they were haggling about this over their field radios. I asked him why Bashir kept spitting, and he said it was because he was suffering from drug withdrawal. Some of what he had been spitting appeared to be brown, though. Was it blood? Had Bashir been beaten? "No, no," Mullah Omar reassured me. "We give him bread, milk—everything he wants. But we don't give him *charas*"—hashish, or opium. "He asks for it every day."

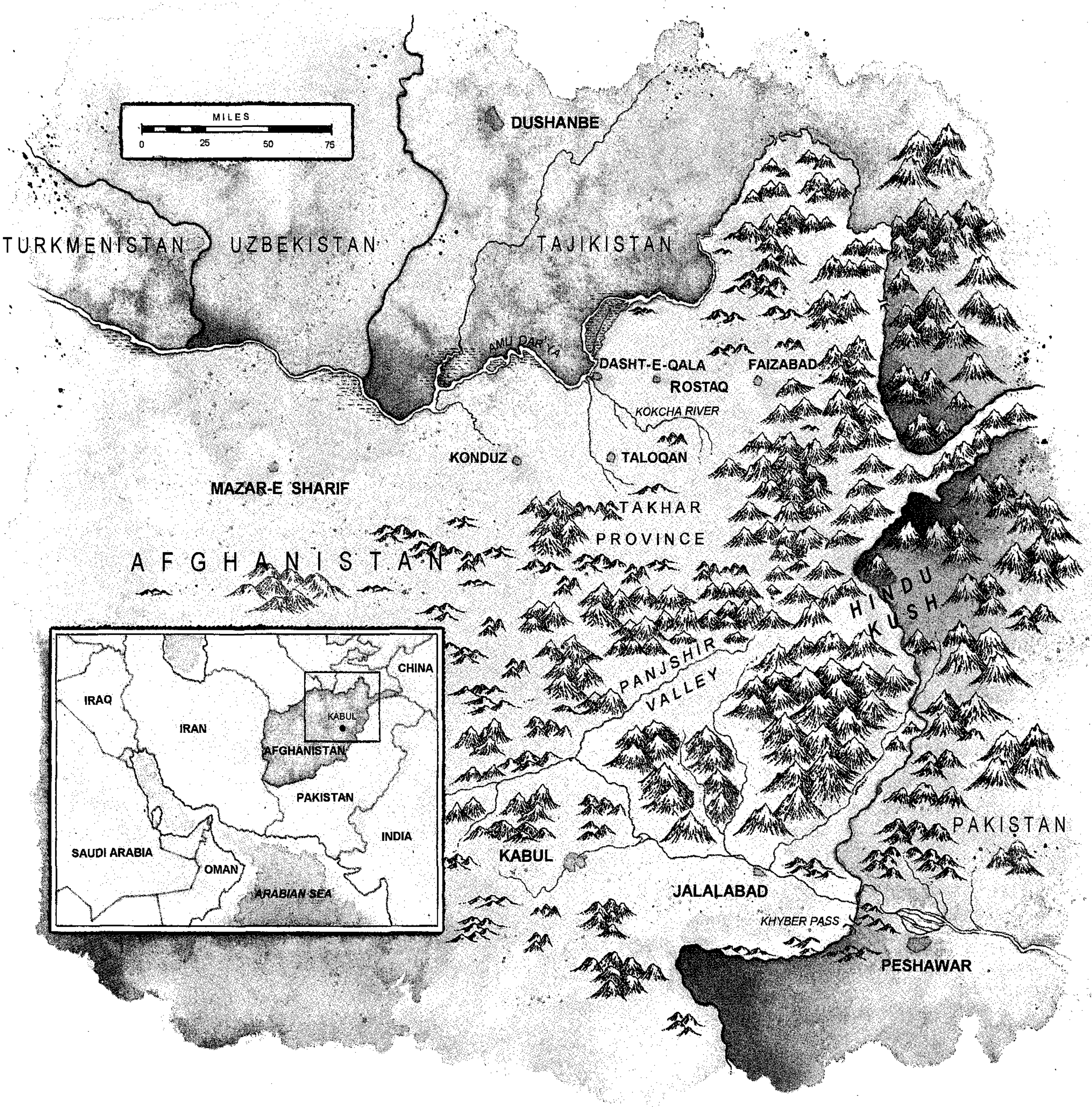
After a few minutes, Bashir was taken back to the hole, and Mullah Omar led me inside his compound to meet his sons. He assembled two groups of boys, all barefoot. One of the groups consisted of his ten sons, aged one month to twelve years, including a set of identical twins. The other group was made up of the five sons of his own twin brother, who was killed a few months ago by the Taliban. A few months before that, their eldest brother, Qari Kamir Alem, a relatively famous mujahideen commander, had been murdered. Mullah Omar captured six men who he said had betrayed Qari Kamir Alem and were responsible for his death, and he had them hanged. He had inherited his brother's command on the front line, and he claimed to have two thousand fighters, but this was almost certainly an exaggeration. He told me that he had begun fighting in 1979, when he was twelve years old and the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. As for his title of "mullah," he said that he had earned it by studying the Koran and other holy books in his home village—which is in the Khoja-i-Gar district, and is now occupied by the Taliban—and then at a madrasah in Pakistan. I left Mullah Omar as dusk approached and he and his men prepared for the sunset prayers.

The day after the air strikes began, I drove past Mullah Omar's compound, again at sunset, and looked out at the desert, toward Bashir's hole. His guards had brought their captive up for air, and he was standing in a shallow ditch they had dug for him. He was visible only from the torso up. He appeared to be rooted in place, half swallowed by the earth.

Dasht-e-Qala is in Takhar Province, and until last year the provincial capital, Taloqan, was the main base of operations for the Northern Alliance's military commander, Ahmed Shah Massoud. But Taloqan fell in heavy fighting, and Massoud retreated to a village closer to the Tajik border, about twenty-five miles northeast of Dasht-e-Qala. He was mortally wounded there on September 9th, when two Arab suicide bombers, posing as journalists, set off a bomb while they were interviewing him. By then, the hills above Dasht-e-Qala were the last barrier between the Taliban and the border that provided the Northern Alliance with access to the outside world and supplies.

Dasht-e-Qala is near the confluence of two rivers—the Amu Dar'ya, which forms the border with Tajikistan, and the Kokcha, which runs into the Amu Dar'ya. The local Northern Alliance organization is called the Kokcha Union and is led by four commanders, each of whom represents a population center. They coöperate with the central Northern Alliance organization, which is nominally headed by Burhanuddin Rabbani, the president of the government formed by the mujahideen who took power in Kabul in 1992, when the Soviet-backed government fell. When the mujahideen were ousted by the Taliban in 1996, Rabbani and Massoud retreated to the northern part of the country, and they and various warlords and other supporters formed the Northern Alliance, which is still recognized as the official representative of Afghanistan by the U.N. and most other countries. Massoud, a brilliant military tactician and a charismatic leader, had been defense minister and vice-president in the mujahideen government, and he was the senior figure in the Northern Alliance.

The local commanders in the Northern Alliance negotiate with Rabbani's government for funds for their troops, but they have a great deal of autonomous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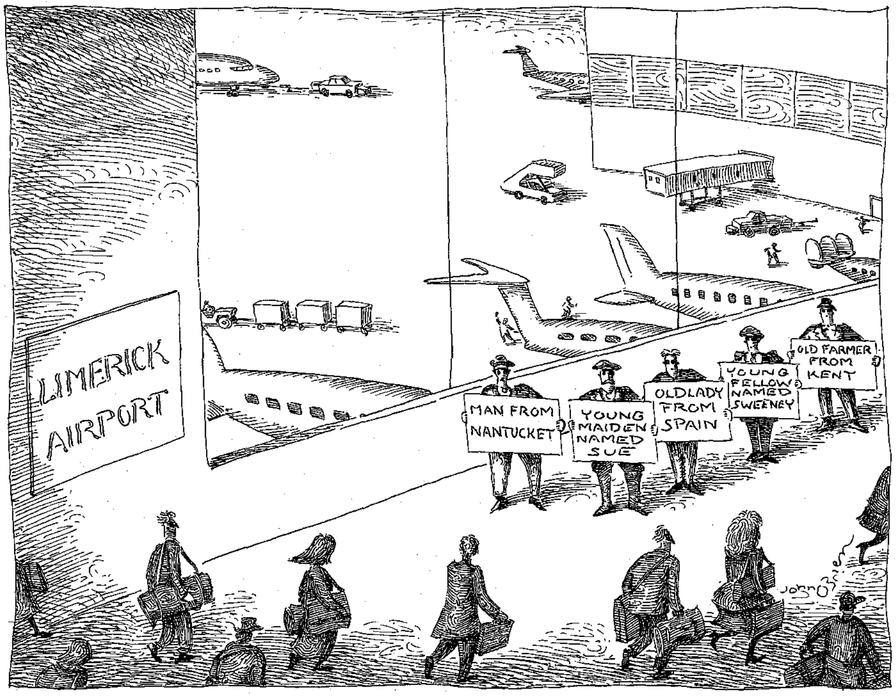
authority in their districts. If an N.G.O. wishes to build a school or an irrigation system or organize a food-for-work road-improvement project, it must make arrangements through the local commanders, whose bargaining power vis-à-vis the Northern Alliance as a whole derives from the fact that they have small armies of their own. The commanders supply troops in the war against the Taliban and coördinate their activities along the front with the Northern Alliance defense minister—formerly Ahmed Shah Massoud and now General Muhammad Fahim, who took Massoud's place after the assassination.

The commanders within a district have a rotating system of leadership. Last winter, the Dasht-e-Qala commander, Mamur Hassan, led the Kochka Union troops for a four-month period and then relinquished his duties to one of the four other district commanders. Hassan is a landowner, and his men are extremely deferential to him, as if he were a feudal lord. He says that he has been at war, more or less constantly, for the past twenty-four years. He is of Uzbek heritage, and he studied at an American-built high school in the province of Helmand, in southern Afghanistan, and at Kabul's agricultural university, but he came back home to Dasht-e-Qala to work on irrigation projects. Then the Soviets invaded. He laughed when I asked what he would do after the coming war. "I will farm," he said. "I have three hundred *jeribs*"—a hundred and fifty acres—"of land. I can be a rich man." For the time being, he supplies trucks to his nephews, who work the farm and split the harvest of wheat, corn, melons, and lentils with him.

Mamur Hassan is a small, sturdy-looking man, and light on his feet. He has a beard of medium length that is mostly gray, and short-cropped black hair running to gray as well. He usually wears a long-tailed tunic and matching pantaloon outfit—which is what most Pakistani and Afghan men wear—and, over it, a military-style multipocketed vest. He has a wide nose, and large brown eyes with crow's-feet at the corners. He listens attentively and speaks with a warm, reedy voice, full of inflection, in Uzbek or Dari, the Afghan variant of Farsi. Mamur Hassan appears to be in his late fifties. Like a lot of Afghans, he does not seem to have thought much about his age, and when we first met he told me that his father, who he said was a hundred and seven when he died two years ago, was thirty when he was born. I pointed out that if that was the case Mamur Hassan would be close to seventy. He hesitated and began counting on his fingers. He said that he was born in the Muslim year 1322—1943 in the Christian calendar—and, since it was now 1380, he agreed that it was possible that he was fifty-seven or fifty-eight.

Hassan lives with his two wives and five of his seven children in a brick-and-concrete house surrounded by orchards, at the end of a dirt drive that passes through a small glade of trees running from Dasht-e-Qala to the Kokcha River. The town itself is little more than a rambling spread of walled family compounds set around an intersection of dirt tracks fronted by little shops with wooden shutters, many of them made from ammunition boxes. On the other side of the river is the front line. Hassan's house is small but comfortable and modern by local standards. The garden is lush—because it is irrigated—with a green lawn and a large plane tree. There is a raised concrete area in a corner for afternoon prayers and for sleeping outdoors in the hot summers. Pink petunias and red and white roses grow next to a concrete bungalow that functions as his staff headquarters and guest house. It has a carpeted room that is used for meals and meetings and prayers, a radio room, a kitchen, and a sleeping room. Large white geese wander along the dirt path outside, near a muddy stream. Two pens house a number of pheasants, which occasionally break out in a peculiar song, a staccato clatter that ranges briefly through several tempos and then stops abruptly. There is an anti-aircraft battery on one side of the house.

The first time I visited Hassan, he sat in a chair about twelve feet away from the one that had been placed on the lawn for me. He raised his arm in the direction of a soldier standing twenty feet behind him, and called for his worry beads. An aide came running with a set of amber beads, which Hassan began working with his left hand. I noticed that when he put the beads down his hands trembled. From time to time, he took out a small round tin case of *naswar*, the tobacco-spice-herb mixture—a mild stimulant—that many Afghan men are addicted to, and tapped a little onto his hand, then popped it into the gap between his teeth and his lower lip. Two bodyguards paced around us, and when I reached into my bag for a notepad they looked especially alert. Later, after I had spent some time at the compound, they laughed and said that they thought I would understand their nervousness about journalists, since the men who killed Massoud had passed themselves off as reporters in search of an interview. When they were no longer suspicious, they greeted me with thermoses of tea and dishes of almonds and candies and tried out English phrases on me. Hassan invited me to stay at the compound when the air strikes became imminent.



It is not the custom in Afghanistan to invite guests into one's living quarters, since wives are not supposed to be seen. I never met the women in Hassan's household, but Hassan's youngest son, Babur Shah, a three-year-old toddler, played around our feet while we talked. Hassan occasionally called out to the little boy, remonstrating with him gently, but for the most part he just looked at him fondly. Babur Shah's older brother Ataullah, who is twenty, was also usually present, and took care of him. Ata, as he is called, has just received a scholarship to study journalism in China. Hassan has two other sons who live and study in Tehran, where one of his wives has a house. Hassan didn't want to send his sons away, but Ahmed Shah Massoud advised him to, so that he would not be distracted by having to look after them while fighting a war. He sent them to Iran because he could not afford to send them to Europe.

Mamur Hassan said that he was one of only two men still alive among the thirty from Dasht-e-Qala who took up arms as mujahideen against the Soviets in 1979. They had started out on their own, without any affiliations, he said, but later on, when Afghan Muslim leaders began receiving arms and funding from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S., they threw in their lot with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the radical leader of an ethnic Pashtun mujahideen group. Hekmatyar was Massoud's rival. "At first, I was a member of Hekmatyar's party, and I fought against the Soviets but also against other Afghans," Hassan said. "We killed a lot of people and destroyed many places, and I regret this. I tell my sons not to have anything to do with political parties." He finally broke with Hekmatyar and joined Massoud, who offered to make a place for him when the mujahideen formed a government in Kabul in 1992. Hassan chose to return to Dasht-e-Qala instead. Now he helps out the Northern Alliance but maintains his independence. "I control a lot of men and a large area," he said. I asked whether the men he commanded owed their loyalties to him or to the Alliance, and he said, "To *me*."

There are apparently around five thousand soldiers in the Kokcha Union, with maybe a thousand in Dasht-e-Qala. "They are ready to fight for me whenever I order them to," Hassan said. The Alliance gave him two hundred Kalashnikovs, and he regularly receives food for six hundred soldiers, but he makes up the shortfalls and provides everything else that is needed, like clothing and medicine. "I pay for it myself," he told me, "out of my own pocket." He laughed. "My family was rich, but we spent it all in the jihad"—the war against the Soviets in the nineteen-eighties and then for four years against the Afghan Communist government.

I asked Hassan what Islamic state he admired, or could see as a model for Afghanistan, and he said that Islam, as he understood it, was a civilized religion and allowed for states in which, for example, Muslims and Christians could live together without problems: "This is the kind of Islamic state we want." He cited Egypt and Saudi Arabia as two nations that he thought had managed to balance the Muslim faith while retaining basic freedoms and also bringing modernization to their countries. I asked what he felt toward unbelievers. "I don't think anything," he said. "I don't mind what they are." I thought that perhaps he was telling me what he thought I wanted to hear, but Hassan does seem to enjoy a reputation locally for moderation and fairness. "He's not all that worked up about religion," Shahmurat, a hulking farmer who has known Hassan for most of his life, said to me. "He's a democrat." Massoud Aziz, an engineer who lives in Dasht-e-Qala, said that Hassan is highly regarded, especially by the middle-class intelligentsia. "He has evolved since his early mujahideen days," Aziz said. "He was not a democratic man then, but he is now."

"It's not just compared to the table, damn it. This is a small portion."

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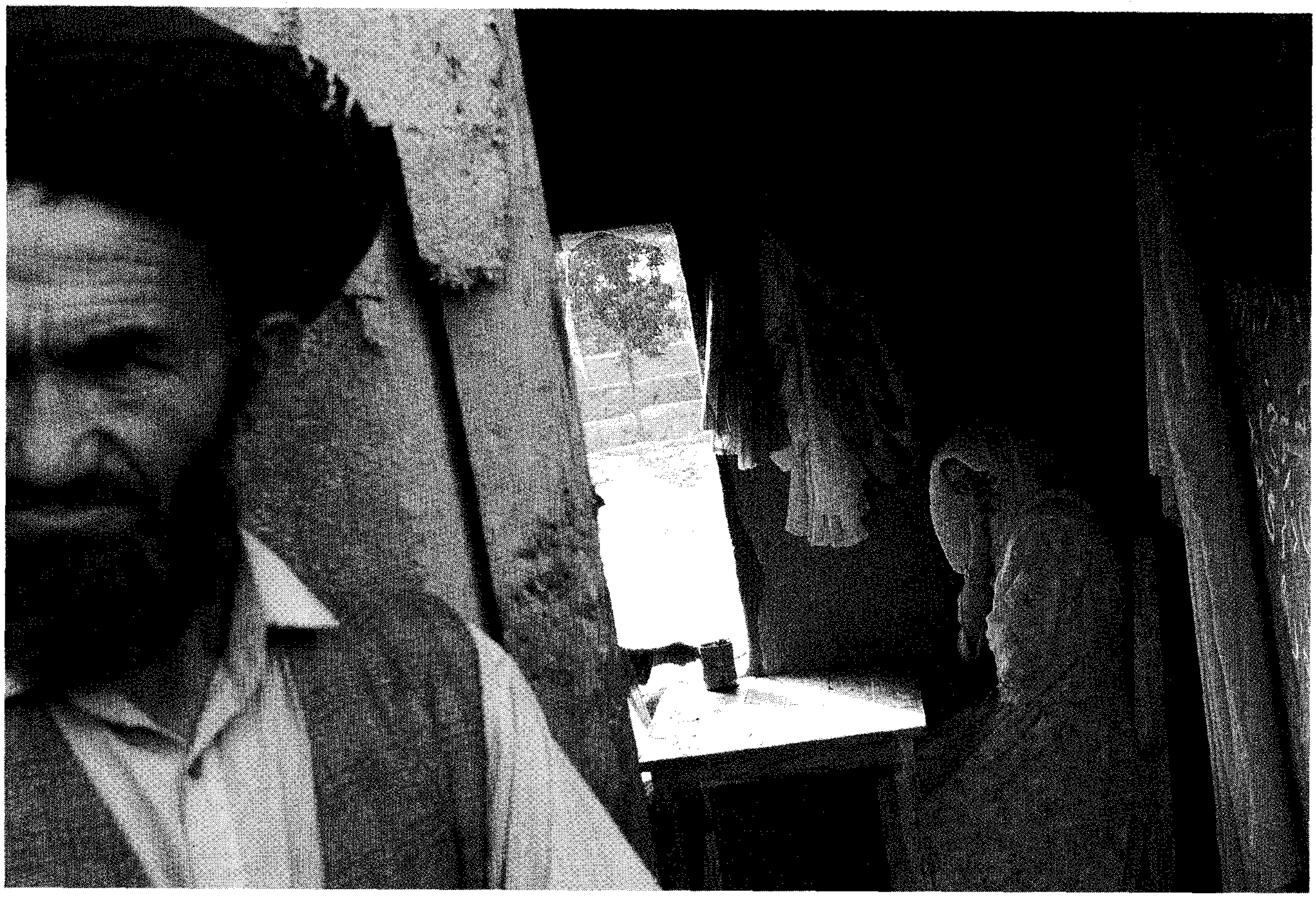
One morning, Mamur Hassan took me with him on an inspection tour of the front line. He sat next to the driver of his Russian UAZ jeep and I sat between two of his bodyguards in the back seat. Two more bodyguards were squeezed into the space behind us. We drove up a huge dirty-yellow hill that housed a labyrinth of bunkers, dugouts, sandbagged bivouacs with howitzers, and Russian T-55 tanks disguised with straw matting, their cannons pointing toward the Taliban positions, which were barely visible through clouds of dust. We sped from bivouac to bivouac, and Hassan popped out of the jeep at each stop, dressed in a powder-blue tunic and green Army fatigue jacket, a white skullcap on his head. He poked around the soldiers' dugouts and asked them what they had and what they needed, and jotted down what they told him on a pad. I went with him into an underground bunker with bare floors and Kalashnikovs and ammo clips hanging on the walls. "Only two blankets for ten men," Hassan noted. "My mujahideen are in bad shape."

The hill where Hassan's men were dug in overlooks the Amu Dar'ya, near where the Kokcha meets it. The flat plain between the hill and the river was honeycombed with large holes, and I realized later that this was what was left of the archeological excavation site of Aï Khanum, where a great Hellenistic city flourished from the fourth to the second centuries B.C. The city had been surrounded by brick ramparts, with a monumental gate and several square towers. It was a formidable citadel with a palace, mansions, a theatre, a temple, and an arsenal. There has been widespread looting of antiquities in Afghanistan, not to mention the destruction of ancient sites by bombs and religious zealots. Many of the treasures from Aï Khanum were displayed in the Kabul Museum, which has been vandalized, its collections dispersed in bazaars and on the illicit art market. The pockmarked plain I saw had apparently been bulldozed to facilitate the looting. The site is one of the main transit points for supplies and equipment coming into Northern Alliance territory from Tajikistan, and we watched people landing on the Afghan side of the river in what looked like a rubber raft. Trucks and other heavy items are brought across by barge. One of the bases of the Russian border guards who are still in charge of security in Tajikistan was visible on a craggy promontory on the far side of the river.

Around four o'clock that day, when the sun was already beginning to descend, I found Mamur Hassan at prayers with some of his commanders in his garden. When they were finished, he called me over and said, in a hushed, edgy voice, that the Americans were supposed to have begun bombing at 2 P.M. that day, but, because there was a sandstorm and poor visibility, they hadn't. "Maybe they have already begun bombing Kandahar or Kabul, or will tonight," he said. The Alliance's front-line units had been or-



The headmaster and a teacher at a new primary school attended by a thousand girls and boys in Northern Alliance territory.

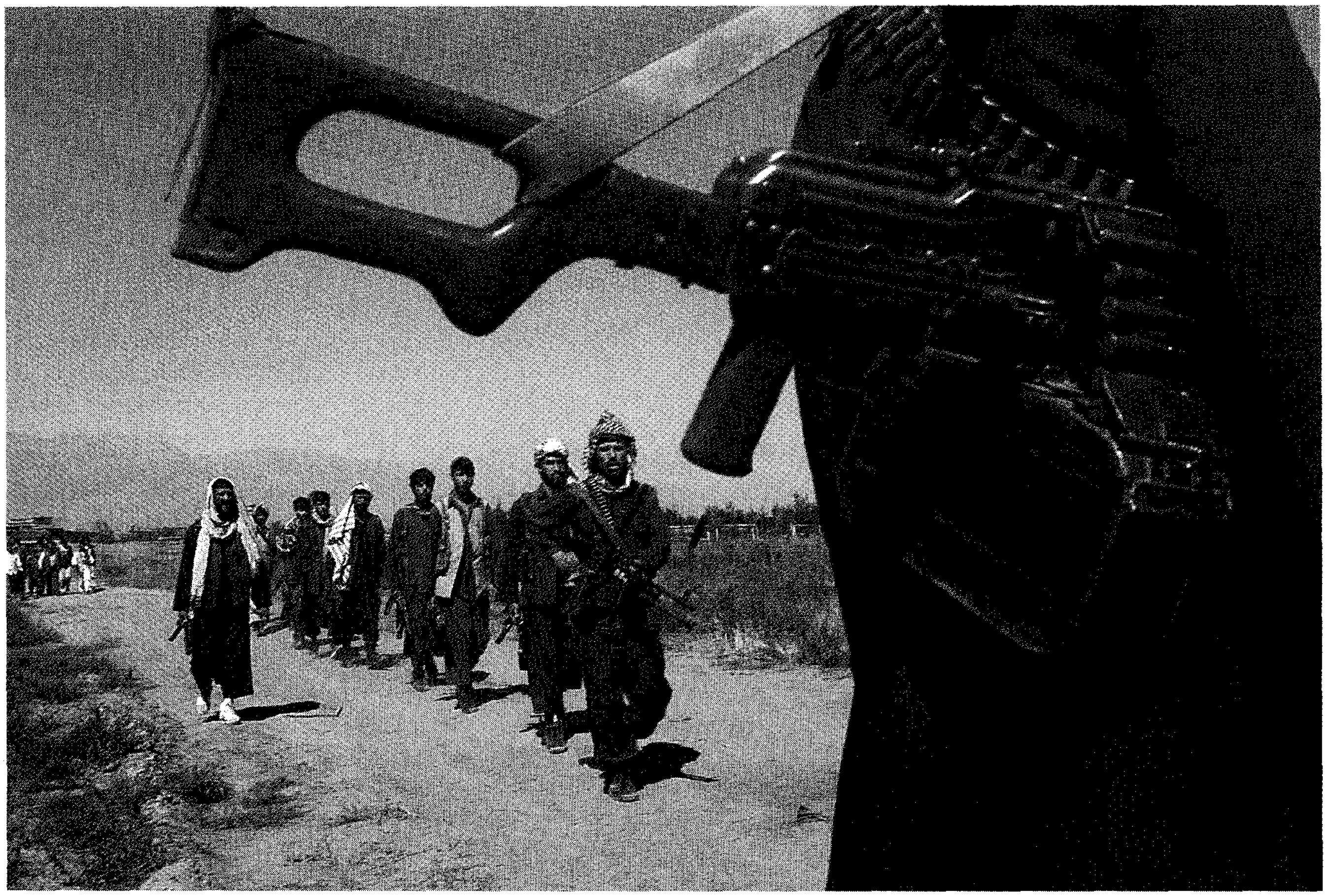
dered to cease shelling, he explained, so that they wouldn't be mistaken for Taliban positions and get bombed. Driving back to the compound where I had been living, thirty minutes or so from Hassan's home, I heard explosions in the distance. They didn't sound like the usual howitzers or rockets. I turned around and returned to Hassan's base, to stay there for the night.

Mamur Hassan inherited his position in Dasht-e-Qala. He said that his grandfather owned a lot of livestock, and that his father made the first irrigation canal in the area. "This was just a desert then," he said. The area still looks like a desert, but there is a series of irrigation ditches between Hassan's house and the river, and the land around them is fertile and tilled. Hassan's grandfather held the title of *arbob*—headman—which he passed down to his son, Hassan's father. Hassan explained that the title is no longer used. He is called Commander, he says, because of the war and because he leads soldiers, but he retains a social rank equivalent to or greater than that of his forefathers. "There are no more *arbobs*," he said.

Hassan explained that his duty as a commander is to provide security, and that during the years of jihad against the Soviets he also had to act as a judge. "Normally, there are courts, laws, and judges," he said, "but during the war, if someone killed someone else, then it was my responsibility to deal with these people. A commander must be educated and understand about courts and laws. Before the fighting, I didn't understand anything about courts, laws, or human rights, but later, after I took charge of Dasht-e-Qala, I sought out advice, and now I understand." His teacher, he says, was a Muslim priest who was killed in fighting among the mujahideen. "In those days, I rode around on a horse and we had no courts or anything, but now we have courts and laws."

There is, apparently, a good deal of overlap between the duties of a commander and those of the son of the district's former *arbob*. Once a month, Hassan and the three other commanders of the Kokcha Union meet with delegates from the villages and towns in their communities to discuss problems, hear proposals, and seek agreement on actions to be taken. "We try to see how we can help the people," he said, "and most of them give their sons to us to be soldiers."

As a child, Hassan listened to his father's stories about fighting the Russians in the nineteen-twenties, when the Central Asian republics were forced into the new U.S.S.R. There was a Tajik revolt against the Russian Communists. "The Russians forced the Tajiks into Afghanistan, and my father joined in their guerrilla raids. I wanted to grow up to be a fighter like that. But now I am tired of fighting." He says that when he was young Dasht-e-Qala was a very different kind of place. "We had everything we needed, even though we lived in a small village. We had schools, peace. There were several companies doing business here. But then the Russians crossed the Amu Dar'ya, and the people of Dasht-e-Qala took their children and fled into the mountains, and many of them died. At the time, I had only ten men with guns, and when I reached where the people were at sunrise the next morning, I found women and children there, dead under the snow. It is one of my most terrible memories."



In the first days of the American and British air strikes, anti-Taliban mujahideen were sent to bolster the front lines.

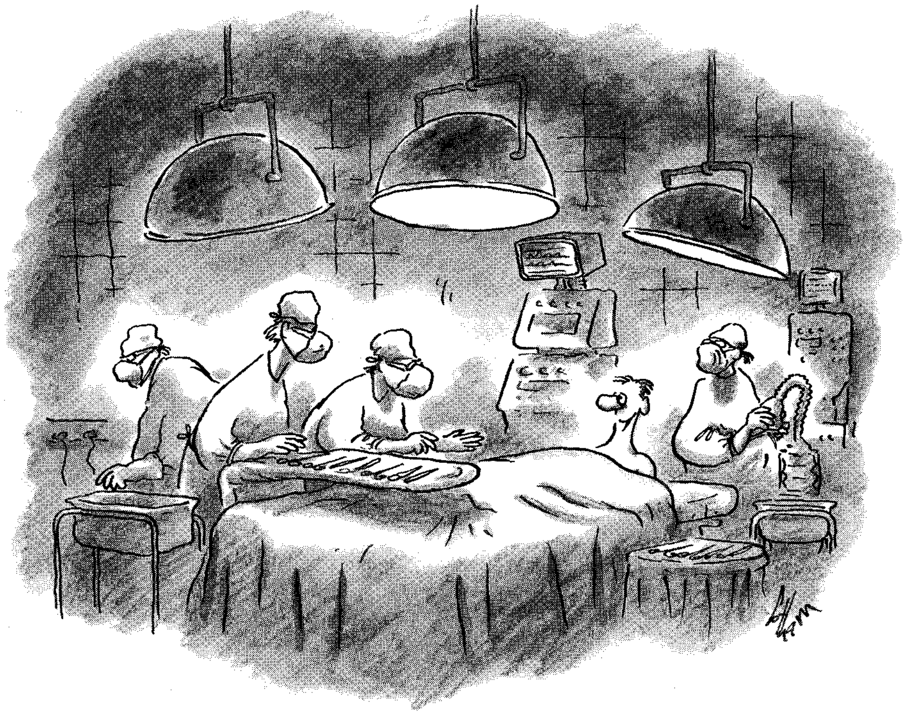
MAGNUM

During the jihad against the Soviets, Hassan and his men hid out in a forested section of the mountains east of Dasht-e-Qala, in the neighboring district of Rostaq, from which they carried out raids. "There were only animals there, goats and things," he said. "It is a hard place to get to—twelve hours by horse from Dasht-e-Qala. We had a big underground cave, several guns, and five Russian jeeps. I spent fourteen years there. The Soviets tried to attack us several times in the summer, but they were unable to get close to us. One winter, though, in the snow, they came right up, wearing white, and we didn't see them. They laid siege to us for three months and tried to starve us out, but even then we knew ways to obtain food. And in the end they weren't able to get us." After the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, leaving the puppet government of President Najibullah in place, Hassan helped lead the mujahideen's successful military campaign to reconquer Taloqan. This was managed with the collusion of two Najib commanders who decided to switch sides. In their joint offensive, they killed the top government commander in Taloqan and seized the city. From then until 1992, when Najibullah's government fell to the mujahideen, Takhar Province was one of the main mujahideen bases in Afghanistan.

Hassan is one of five brothers. Two of them, he said, were killed by the Soviets, along with his mother and five of his nephews. He said that his mother was killed in reprisal for his mujahideen activities. He was in the mountains, and one night he sneaked down to her house and she slaughtered a lamb and fed him and his men. Hassan said that the Russians heard about this and came to her and asked if he had been there. She said no, but they killed her anyway. Within two months, his two brothers were also dead. "The person who helped the Russians"—that is, the man who informed them about Hassan's visit to his mother's house—"was a relative who lived nearby," Hassan said. "The mujahideen had killed his father, and this was his way of taking vengeance. Later, we caught him and I said to him, 'We killed your father and you killed my mother and that's the end of it.' We ended things there." When I expressed surprise at his merciful gesture, he laughed. "Now I am amazed at what I did. But, because of it, this place is secure and no one threatens me or wants to kill me."

Hassan told me that he had also employed conciliatory tactics in 1992, when Dasht-e-Qala reverted to his control. He called an assembly, a *jalsa*, which lasted two or three days. The area had been bitterly divided between non-Communists and pro-Communists. He proposed that they leave their rancor behind and rebuild their communities under a single commander—him. That is why, he repeated, "Dasht-e-Qala is a secure place and at peace and no one wants to kill me."

Hassan's wives wear burkhas, the extreme, head-to-toe coverings that the Taliban require and that are common in Northern Alliance territory also. "We must follow our customs," Hassan says. But he doesn't necessarily favor them. "Why is it that in Mecca, the holiest Islamic place, women go with their faces uncovered—and men, too, wear nothing on their heads? If that is the center of Islam, then why don't they wear burkhas?" He concluded, with a rueful



"It would be a great honor for me to be counted as one of your successes."

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smile, "I think the burkha is just an old-fashioned Afghan custom."

One afternoon in Dasht-e-Qala, two women, one in a deep-violet burkha and the other wearing emerald green, floated past, briefly enlivening the backdrop of beat-up olive-green military vehicles, brown desert, and dusty shop fronts. The sight of women, or at least discernibly human creatures in feminine clothes, is about the only thing that relieves the harshness of the landscape. The visible part of Afghan society is unremittingly male, as is the land, which is drab and muscular. There is nothing soft about anything here, none of the creature comforts a Westerner takes for granted. Dust clogs your throat and coats hair and skin, and the people, who cover their faces with scarves and turbans, have learned to live with it in much the same way the British have grown used to rain. Much of northern Afghanistan today is a pre-industrial society, without electricity, running water, or telephones. There are not even toys for the children. Water is pumped by hand from wells that have been dug with shovels, and roads are made by crews who break rocks and produce gravel with sledgehammers. Barefoot boys walk back and forth through beds of harvested rice, turning the grains with their toes to dry them in the sun. In the bazaars, porters carry poles with reed baskets on the ends, filled with everything from water to rock salt, which is sold in pinkish-gray chunks before being ground down to powder. Lambs are tethered next to men with long knives who slaughter them and hang the carcasses from hooks, hacking them into a steadily diminishing mess of blood and meat and bone and fat by day's end. Grain and vegetables are weighed in tin scales that are balanced with stones. On market days, people walk from distant villages—some even cross Taliban lines—to buy livestock (donkeys, camels, cattle, and horses) and then they herd the animals back home. The flat horizon is dotted with robed men riding donkeys, others on camelback, and the odd motorbike spitting up clouds of dust.

There is a new primary school for boys and girls in the village of Nawabad, a couple of miles from Dasht-e-Qala. Six hundred boys study in the morning, and the girls, four hundred and thirty of them, come to class in the afternoon. They study the Koran and Islamic religion, history, mathematics, and geography. Some of the older children are learning English. Most of them come from families who fled the Taliban's military advance last year, when they seized Taloqan and the area right up to the Kokcha River. A couple of hundred displaced families still live in miserable little shacks on a scorching wasteland just outside the village, but some five thousand families have been resettled with host families by N.G.O.s. The school is supported by Unicef, which pays the salaries of the teachers, and Shelter Now International, which built the latrines and provides some of the classroom materials. The school opened in May; many of the girls had not been in a classroom since they fled their home towns and villages, where the Taliban had closed all their schools.

I visited the school a half hour or so before the day's classes ended. In twelve separate rooms off a mud courtyard, girls in headscarves sat on reed mats, reciting their lessons in unison. The teachers, mostly young women in their late teens and early twenties, stood in front of blackboards, their heads uncovered. Each of them held a twig switch, as a pointer, and as I entered classrooms or passed by doorways, many of them froze, or shifted their scarves. I asked Headmaster Muhamadi if one of the teachers might be willing to speak to me, and he said no, that was not a good idea. Not because of them, or him, but because of what people in the village would say.

The women teachers were beautiful, with large brown eyes and fair skin. They wore colorful tunics, some of which were decorated with flower patterns, and billowy pantaloons. One woman wore several gold bracelets, and most of the women had dark kohl painted around their eyes. When the classes ended and the students piled out from the school through the mud doorway, the teachers slipped silently down the dirt lane, garbed in white burkhas. They had become wraiths, stumbling along on foot or riding donkeys, bobbing away amid a throng of chattering, happy, barefaced girls.

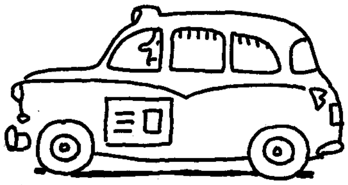
The day of the first air strikes, Mamur Hassan was in the nearby town of Khoja Bahauddin, where the Northern Alliance defense ministry has its headquarters. He returned around sunset and prayed with his lieutenants in the garden. Then everybody became somewhat frantic, and Hassan rushed around between his house and the radio room in the bungalow. When several men were getting ready to leave in their jeeps and began making a lot of noise, he shouted at them to be quiet and to remain on high alert at their bases. He told one man that if he wasn't prepared he would kill him. After they left, Hassan stood under the plane tree, watching the sky above and looking at his wristwatch, twitching with tension.

The men who stayed in the compound listened to Radio Tehran and the BBC's Farsi Service on short-wave radios. When reports of missile attacks began coming in, an exchange of tank and Katyusha rocket fire—baritone booms and clattery whooshes, respectively—could be heard in the distance. A dozen or so mujahideen stayed up most of the night, listening to the news and eavesdropping on enemy field-radio conversations. Hassan's personal secretary, Osman Muhammad, a twenty-four-year-old medical worker who had given up his job to fight the Taliban, had a long conversation on his radio with a Northern Alliance defector he knows. Osman explained to me that the man had had a misunderstanding with Qasi Qabir, Mamur Hassan's counterpart in Khoja Bahauddin, and had fled the district with his family. For the past two and half years, he had been serving as an officer with the Taliban near Taloqan. Osman said that he had called the man when the bombing began to say, "Come back now or else you will die." The defector had replied that it was too late, that there was no going back, that Qasi Qabir would kill him. Osman said that he had given him his personal guarantee of safety if he returned, but he admitted to me that the promise was worthless, and that Qasi Qabir would have the final say about the defector's fate. "It would be a big problem if Qasi Qabir found out the man came back and stayed here with Mamur Hassan," he said. "He would ask, 'Why are you protecting my enemy?' " I asked Osman if the defector agreed with the Taliban. "No, that's what so terrible about this," he said. "He doesn't understand why fate has driven him into the arms of his enemies."

The next morning, I asked Mamur Hassan how he had slept. He chuckled and said he had watched TV and listened to the news until 1 A.M. He has a satellite dish and an aerial, and is thus one of only a few people in Dasht-e-Qala who can watch television. He said that if the Americans kept up their missile strikes and bombing raids the Taliban would go to the mountains to wage a guerrilla campaign. This was not his speculation, he said, but a plan already outlined by the Taliban. He also said that the Northern Alliance had an agreement with the Americans to launch a military offensive in tandem with their raids. Without the air strikes, Hassan said, the Northern Alliance would be able to do very little. He refused to be drawn out on the question of how anyone was going to defeat the Taliban in a guerrilla war in the mountains, although as a veteran of fourteen years in similar mountains he seemed qualified to comment.

"So," I said, "all this talk about finishing off the Taliban in a week once the bombing started was just hot air?" He smiled. "It was to boost the morale of the mujahideen. You understand. The fact of the matter is that the Taliban are very powerful. We need the air strikes in order to make any headway." He claimed that the Taliban had recently increased their troop strength along the hundred or so kilometres of the Takhar Province front line from fifteen to twenty-five thousand soldiers. "This will give you some idea of what we face." Hassan said that if the Americans were able to inflict real damage with the air strikes and if they and the Russians would give the Northern Alliance the military equipment they had promised, then the Taliban could be taken down in a couple of months. "General Fahim has told me to collect all my soldiers and to be at the ready. But it is very difficult for me. I have food for only six hundred men and I have one thousand to feed. So the conditions are not right for a sustained attack. The truth is this. In these conditions, it's impossible."

Hassan had promised to introduce me to Sadruddin, the man who betrayed him and caused his mother's death during the years of the jihad.



Sadruddin is forty-five, but he looks closer to sixty, a thin man with a goatee and a deeply furrowed, weatherbeaten face. He arrived one morning a few days after the air strikes began. Sadruddin is Mamur Hassan's second cousin, and he is married to Hassan's niece. I asked him to tell me his version of the story. Had Mamur Hassan killed his father? Yes, Sadruddin said, although Hassan did not give the order. The leader of the mujahideen group that Hassan belonged to at the time had ordered him to capture Sadruddin's father, a well-off landowner, and six others like him from the Dasht-e-Qala area. They took them back to their cave in the mountains of Rostaq, where the mujahideen commander executed them with a pistol. He killed them, Sadruddin says, not because they were pro-Soviet but because they were influential and wealthy people, and he was jealous and afraid of their power. "My father was a good man, and many people followed him. When he died, I was just a boy, and all the responsibility of my family fell upon me." He said that his desire for vengeance was so great that he joined the army of the Najibullah regime. "After I joined the Najib government, I told my soldiers to kill Mamur Hassan's mother." Had he been present at the execution? "Yes," he acknowledged. "But I stood some distance away. We killed her with guns."

Mamur Hassan had been unable to retaliate immediately, Sadruddin said, but "when Najib fell, and Ahmed Shah Massoud occupied this valley, Mamur Hassan became the mujahideen commander, and I fled with thirty-five soldiers to a village that we secured. Mamur Hassan laid siege to us. I held out for four days, until an assembly of *arbobs*, led by Mamur Hassan's father, who was the most respected of all of them, arranged a reconciliation between us. We resolved our differences then, and have been friends ever since. Afterward, all of my soldiers joined the mujahideen, under the command of Mamur Hassan, and later I married his niece." Sadruddin didn't think that this was all that anomalous. "In the Holy Koran it says that if someone kills someone in your family, then you must kill that person. It also preaches forgiveness." Sadruddin is a wheat farmer now. "No more war for me," he said. ♦

A REPORTER AT LARGE

MAN OF FAITH

Can Jesse Jackson save himself?

BY PETER J. BOYER

Early one Saturday morning toward the beginning of summer, I was awakened by a telephone call from Jesse Jackson, urging me to come to Chicago right away so that we could "talk some faith talk." I had written to Jackson proposing a discussion about the nature of his faith and ministry, and now he said he welcomed the prospect. "The very thought of it is like well water for me," he said, after months of dodging questions about the revelation that he had fathered a child outside of his marriage, the result of an affair with a member of his staff.

We talked for a few minutes about scheduling, and I agreed to catch the first flight to Chicago on Monday morning. Then, before hanging up, Jackson preached a short sermon about carnal sin and divine forgiveness, taken from the story of the condemned adulteress rescued by Jesus, in the Book of John.

"Jesus walkin' down the road and hears this loud, cheering crowd and a woman hollerin' and rocks thumpin'. He says, 'What's happenin', guys?'

" 'We caught her in the act of prostitution. We saw the whole thing, no hearsay, we caught her *cold*. She broke religious law, she broke political law. She got to die.'

"Jesus says, 'Prostitution? You know, you can't prostitute by yourself. Where's her partner?' And the crowd got real still. 'Where is *he*? And, by the way, if there are any amongst *you*, you who are doin' this rock throwin', who have not had sex with her, or wished you could have, then throw the rock.'

"Then, all of a sudden, things got real quiet. And then one of the eldest of that crowd left first—I imagine he'd probably been doin' it the longest. Then they *all* left. Now Jesus said to her, 'You know, this is wrong. You stop whorin'. Go, and sin no more.'

"We are all sinners, saved by mercy and grace," he concluded. "Mercy. And grace."

When I arrived early Monday morning at Jackson's home, a comfortable white stucco on a street of handsome houses on Chicago's South Side, he greeted me dressed in shorts, slippers, and a black satin robe, and suggested we take a walk. As we strolled around the block, Jackson, still in his slippers, told me he'd been up before dawn praying and meditating with the television on, and that something said by a televangelist had arrested his attention. The preacher had talked about illegitimate birth, a subject Jackson cannot resist.

"Well, of course, no child is illegitimate," he said. "All children are legitimate. God is in this thing. Only God. Every sexual encounter, millions of genes and chromosomes pass each other, and somehow, some way, God connects. If you've ever seen it on the microscope, there's this awful *explosion* that takes place, a tremendous connection takes place. God legitimates life. And what separates us from the *dis*grace of that instant is the *amazing* grace of God. It may be seen as *political* disgrace from a political point of view, but it couldn't be a *natural* disgrace. It couldn't be a *heavenly* disgrace. God does not *dis*grace infants."

Those themes, illegitimacy and disgrace, are central to Jackson's own drama. Born to an unwed teen-age mother in segregated South Carolina, and excluded from the life of his natural father, who was an exalted figure in the black community, Jackson exploited the pain of his childhood like a precious natural resource. It fuelled his urgent ambitions, and when he made it up and out it gave him a message—"I Am Somebody!"—that lifted a generation. Now, at sixty, he had circled back into the very snare he escaped so long ago.

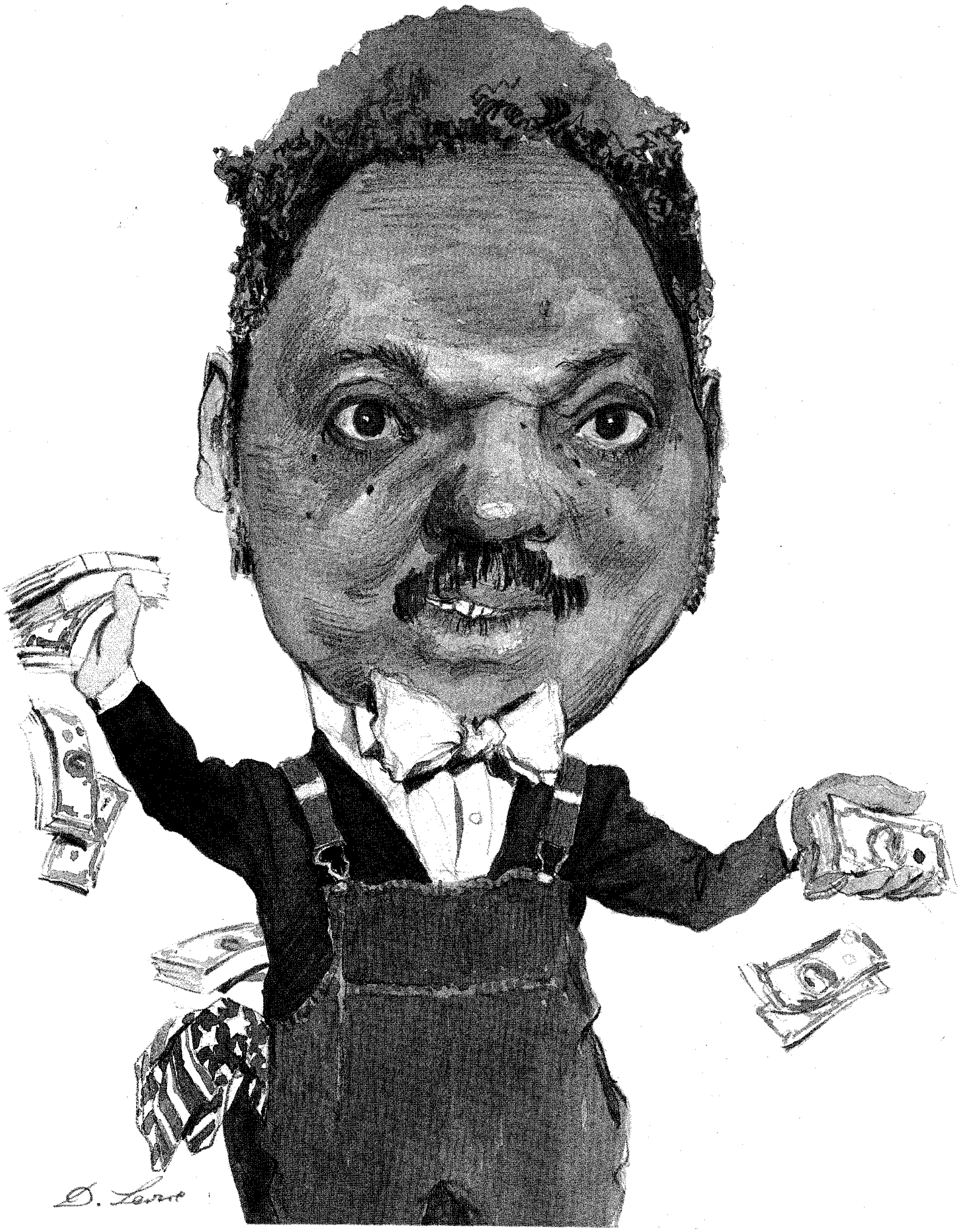
My interest in the subject of Jackson's faith was related to that transgression. Jesse Jackson had twice run for President, had held the world's attention as a crisis negotiator, and was the generally recognized leader of black America; but he was, first, a Christian minister—one of the best known in the world. As such, I wondered, had Jackson faced in his scandal anything like a spiritual crisis? And, if so, what resolution did his faith direct?

Our conversation, begun that morning in Chicago, continued over the course of the next four months, in airplanes, limousines, and the halls of Congress, and culminated late last month in a few feverish days on the brink of a proposed peace mission to Afghanistan. In that time, Jackson returned again and again to the story of Jesus and the adulteress, and I finally realized that he was not merely being repetitive. In that story lay the answers to my questions, and the essence of Jackson's particular brand of faith.

The story of the woman taken in adultery, with its line of pure, compassionate judgment—"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone"—is one of the most widely quoted passages from Scripture, transcending the bounds of faith. It is also possibly the most disputed passage, owing partly to doubts about John's authorship which are nearly as old as Christianity itself. Theologians from Erasmus to Calvin refused to accept it as genuine, and early Church fathers excluded it from public readings and service books. But those early ascetics had another worry about the story: that some believers might infer from it a license to sin. Mosaic law, after all, prescribed the death penalty for adultery; Jesus had let the woman off with a warning ("Go, and sin no more").

Jackson, a former seminarian, harbors no qualms about the passage. On the contrary, in his view teaching forgiveness was the main point of Jesus'

DAVID LEVINE



Jackson, in a bid to regain his public stature, has in recent months engaged Wall Street, the United States Navy, and the Taliban.

time on earth. "He brings to the agenda some mercy with justice, and some understanding," Jackson says. In the case of the adulteress, Jackson speculates, Jesus likely considered her sin in its context. "He had to think, She was not born a prostitute. Was it that she grew up and saw her mother and father in the act of sex? Was it that she saw her mama was a prostitute? Was she abused by some stepfather? Was she poor and had to sell her body for some money? Did she lose her self-esteem? What drove her there? That would be his concern."

In his own case, too, Jackson insisted, some context is required. "Every preacher is a sinner preaching salvation. . . . A saint is a sinner who got back up again. Every one of 'em. I mean, these guys murdered people. They're saints now. Paul, these guys, they actually *murdered* people. They're now St. Paul, St. This, St. That." Jackson also cited King David, who coveted the married Bathsheba and dispatched her husband, Uriah, to the front lines to be killed. "By today's standards, they would have been in jail," Jackson said. "David got Uriah killed, for Bathsheba. Got him *killed*."

In pleading his case, Jackson was arguing that his adultery was, in the big ledger of sins, a relatively minor offense. But his more significant point seemed to be that a showing of meaningful contrition and atonement on his part, such as a leave-taking from his ministry—which many expected and which he had promised—was really not necessary. "It's an error to fall down," he explained, "but it's a sin to wallow."

The Bible, of course, overflows with wallowers, including Paul, who was struck by such piercing remorse after his conversion that he took neither food nor drink for three days, and David, who wrote the great Psalm of penitence, the fifty-first (offering to God "a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart").

But Jackson's theology is highly personalized. It centers on a Jesus who was a black social activist ordained by God who got himself into trouble by fighting the social order—defending a woman on death row, for example—a profile strikingly similar to that of a certain modern-day African-American social activist. ("I can identify with Jesus, I understand him. He was born with a controversy about who his daddy was.")

The tenet of faith most useful to Jackson just now is that having to do with forgiveness, the instant, complete redemption granted to David and to Paul, which is, Jackson believes, his own portion, too. It is his license—not to sin again, as the early Church fathers had fretted, but to try to face down his scandal by simply refusing to be scandalized, to defy disgrace by acting as if it were not there.

In the time that I spent with Reverend Jackson, I came to realize that he was not discernibly afflicted by any spiritual crisis, and that in searching for it I had inadvertently stumbled upon something else. It is Jackson's last great campaign, a quest to retain the place in American life which he had risked by his own recklessness, and to prove that, after everything, Jesse Jackson is still somebody.

The prospect of ruin arrived at Jesse Jackson's door one evening last January, in the person of a reporter from the *National Enquirer*, who went to Jackson's home in Chicago and asked his wife, Jacqueline, "Mrs. Jackson, do you know that there's a child?"

After nearly forty years of marriage, Jacqueline Jackson had more than occasionally encountered questions about her husband's fidelity, but this, she knew, was something different, and serious. There was a child, a twenty-month-old baby girl named Ashley, fathered by Jackson during an affair with an academic named Karin Stanford, whom Jackson had hired to run his Washington operation. Mrs. Jackson politely sent the reporter away, and immediately alerted her husband and five grown children, who were scattered across the country. "We have a problem," she warned them, and the family began to gather.

The late John Scanlon, a New York public-relations wonder with a specialty in debacle (he advised Bob Kerrey after the revelation earlier this year that Kerrey's Navy SEAL unit had been involved in a Vietnam massacre), was brought into the circle, as was the old Jackson associate Frank Watkins, who worked in Jackson's Presidential runs in 1984 and 1988. Jesse Jackson, Jr., now a congressman, was a key strategist. As the group assessed its options, it inevitably drew instruction from Bill Clinton's Monica Lewinsky scandal, and the former President's infamous finger-pointing denial of the affair. It was decided that Jackson would come clean. There was disagreement, though, about just how much Jackson should say and how he should say it.

The younger Jackson sons, Jonathan and Yusef, urged their father to declare on television that the family had dealt with the matter privately, and then invite the press to "move on."

"But it doesn't quite work like that," Jesse, Jr., argued. "This story may come out on Thursday, but it doesn't end on Sunday. This is a public process that you have to go through."

Contrition was required, and atonement. Watkins reminded everyone of the "four C's" that the Jackson camp had urged upon President Clinton during his travails as a way of regaining moral authority—confession (admitting he did it), contrition (saying he's sorry), conversion (promising not to do it again), and consequences (accepting responsibility).

Jesse, Jr., again recalling Clinton-Lewinsky, insisted that his father's statement should not be made before television cameras. "Reverend," he said, addressing his father by the honorific that is customary among the Jackson sons, "there's nothing that we want to say on video that can allow our detractors, from ABC to Fox, to play it over and over and over again, to solidify an impression of you in the minds of the American people that they will play until you die."

On Wednesday, January 17th, the Jackson circle received a hint of what was to come. The New York *Post* had got on the scent of the *Enquirer* story and prepared a front-page article for the next day's editions ("REV. JESSE'S LOVE CHILD"). That night, Jackson preëmpted the tabloids, issuing a written statement through his office.

"I am father to a daughter who was born outside of my marriage," Jackson confessed in his statement. "I love this child very much and have assumed responsibility for her emotional and financial support since she was born. . . . I fully accept responsibility and I am truly sorry for my actions." Jackson stated that he had asked for the forgiveness of God, his wife, and each of his children for the "extremely painful, trying and difficult time" he had visited on them.

Jackson also declared, "I will be taking some time off to revive my spirit and reconnect with my family before I return to my public ministry."

The leave-taking seemed portentous, and invited the assumption that Jackson was irrevocably damaged. The language of that statement—"taking some time off," "revive my spirit," "reconnect with my family"—was the code of disgraced public figures, a signpost to an oblivion from which few returned. No one knew this better than Jackson himself, but he had no intention of stepping aside.

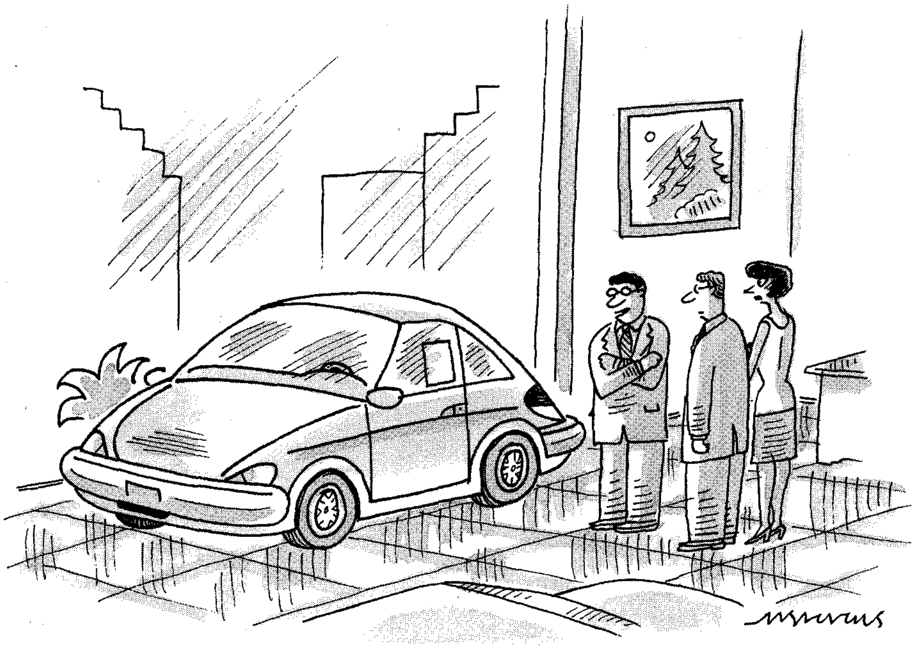
The Jackson children had known about the child since shortly after her birth, and Jackie found out months before the story became public. There had been much family distress in the long months since, but whatever reconciliation remained to be done was unlikely to be achieved by a gloomy Jackson hanging around the house. As for the revival of his spirit, Jackson was already at work on that.

There is no good moment for a love-child scandal, but the timing of the revelation about Jackson was especially awkward. The story happened to break during what Jackson had proclaimed as a "Week of Moral Outrage" to protest "the crowning of a new President," George W. Bush. Jackson had worked hard for Democrats during the 2000 campaign, and he worked even harder in the days and weeks afterward, during the contest over Florida's results. He had flown into Florida the day after Election Day, campaigning to excite the passions of frustrated Democratic voters who, Jackson said, had been disenfranchised by faulty voting procedures and by the Bush political machine. Even after Bush's victory was declared final, Jackson sustained the assault, arguing that Democrats had to continue to challenge the legitimacy of Bush's Presidency. The culmination of that protest was to have been a rally led by Jackson outside the state capitol, in Tallahassee, on Saturday, January 20th.

Jackson had released his leave-of-absence statement on the evening of Wednesday, January 17th, but by the next day he was seriously considering going to Florida. At 5 A.M. on Friday, he was on the phone with Kweise Mfume, head of the N.A.A.C.P., and Reverend Joseph E. Lowery, one of the elder statesmen of the civil-rights movement, who were urging Jackson to take a private jet to Tallahassee. "There was this tension between private contrition and the public calling," Jackson says. Inside the family circle, Jackie Jackson argued that this was a critical moment for planning her husband's strategy for survival, "and you can't do that up in the air." The Florida rally was staged without Jackson.

But Jackson's declared intent to take leave from his work imperilled an even more important event, one that Jackson knew he could not miss. On the schedule for the next week was Jackson's annual Wall Street Project, in New York, his effort to redress what he has called the "economic apartheid" practiced by American capitalism. The project has its roots in the civil-rights movement, and in such undertakings as Martin Luther King, Jr.,'s Montgomery bus boycott, when blacks directed their spending practices to achieve social ends. King later expanded the notion to include the goal of broadening economic opportunity by entering into covenants with businesses that hired blacks and carried the products of black-owned businesses, while confronting those which did not with the prospect of a boycott. This effort was called Operation Breadbasket, and King placed the Chicago administration of Operation Breadbasket in the hands of Jesse Jackson, who was then in his late twenties. Three years after King's death, Jackson split with King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference—a bitter parting, amid accusations of financial irregularities—and he more or less took Operation Breadbasket with him, renaming it PUSH (People United to Save Humanity). Jackson's engagement with American business (the Wall Street Project has corollaries in Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, and Silicon Valley) has in recent years become, at least financially, the most significant aspect of his work. Jackson's weft of social-service organizations operating under the aegis of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition brought in seventeen million dollars in revenue last year; almost all of it came from American business.

From the beginning, Jackson's economic campaign has been somewhat tenuous morally, mainly because his dealings with business look so much like shakedowns. Typically, Jackson will target a corporation whose allegedly unfair, or even racist, practices have gone unaddressed until discerned and publicized by him. A deadline is set, by which time the company is to either remedy its offending policies or face a Jackson-led boycott and a negative publicity campaign. Stunned company officials often re-



"It runs on its conventional gasoline-powered engine until it senses guilt, at which point it switches over to battery power."

spond defensively to this ultimatum at first, stoutly proclaiming their corporate devotion to diversity and tolerance. Then there is a period of negotiation, followed by a breakthrough and, finally, resolution. Jackson praises the company's progressive journey, and relieved executives announce plans to become even more diverse and tolerant, by directing business toward minority banks, contractors, consultants, advertising firms, and so on.

Often, a contribution is also made to one of Jackson's organizations (among them the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and the Citizenship Education Fund), and usually the black-owned businesses that benefit from Jackson's campaign become Rainbow/PUSH benefactors and personal associates of Jackson's, if they aren't already. When A.T. & T. and TCI announced merger plans two years ago, Jackson opposed the deal until the companies hired a minority-owned investment bank (Blaylock & Partners) to float an eight-billion-dollar bond offering. The Chicago *Sun-Times* reported that when Jackson rescinded his objection A.T. & T. donated four hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars to Jackson's Citizenship Education Fund, and Blaylock gave thirty thousand dollars. That same year, according to the Washington *Post*, Jackson granted his support to the merger of the telecommunications companies SBC and Ameritech, which together gave half a million dollars to the Citizenship Education Fund.

Sometimes, Jackson or his family seems to benefit—at least, indirectly—from these dealings. In the nineteen-eighties, Jackson led a boycott against Anheuser Busch, the brewer of Budweiser, with the theme "Bud Is a Dud." Anheuser Busch later became a donor to the Citizenship Education Fund, and today much of the Budweiser quaffed in Chicago is distributed by Jackson's sons Yusef and Jonathan, and a third partner, who were granted a prized distributorship three years ago.

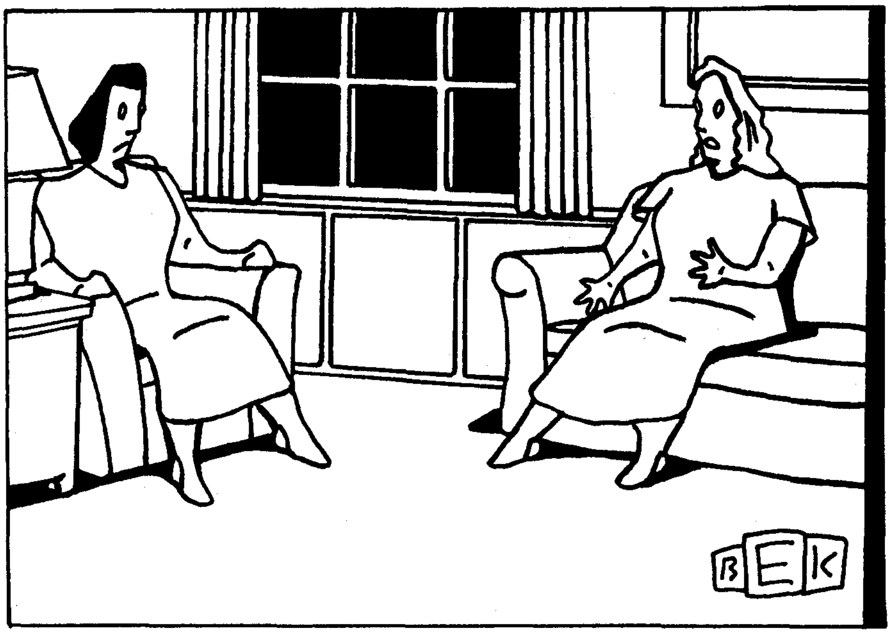
Jackson's dealings have been characterized variously as shakedowns, extortion, and a protection racket (the conservative *Weekly Standard* called Jackson's operation "perhaps the most sophisticated mau-mauing apparatus ever hatched by a civil rights activist"), but Jackson is unembarrassed. He explained to me that in his formative years he became an admirer of Karl Marx: after visiting Marx's grave, he realized that Marx was not the evil force that "brainwashed" Americans were taught to believe but, rather, was driven by an Old Testament-style system of social justice. A problem with Marxism, Jackson said, was that it lacked the component of faith. "We go beyond where Marx stopped," he said. "Marx was right to fight the co-opted church, he was right to fight state-controlled religion, he was right to fight capitalist exploitation of workers without nobody to defend them, he was right to say 'Redistribute the wealth.' But you can't just be an economic determinist; faith fits in this thing someplace, too. There's not a lot of faith in Marxism."

As Jackson sees it, he says, he is only doing God's work. "My premise is, the earth is the Lord's. All of us have a right to the tree of life. I, like Amos, must cry out against some living in awesome splendor and surplus, with vines hangin' low with grapes, and others with clouds hangin' low and can't see the sunshine. For some, it's low grapes; for others, it's low clouds. And God did not distribute resources in such a distorted, perverted way."

As it happens, a meaningful portion of wealth has been redistributed in the direction of Jackson himself, allowing him to maintain a measure of comfort in what is, by any standard, a gruelling schedule. He is on the road two hundred and fifty days a year. He travels in limousines and private jets, and he stays in hotel suites when he is away from his homes in Chicago and Washington. Travel expenses reported by Jackson last year amounted to more than a half million dollars. "I live beyond desperate needs," he says, "and I'm free to do what I want to do full time."

For some businesses, a certificate of tolerance, that most exalted of public-relations prizes, is worth the price of a few targeted contracts and a corporate contribution or two. Jackson's list of corporate donors reads like a brand-name hall of fame, running from AOL Time Warner to the Walt Disney Company, with NASCAR in between. But that is not to say that corporate America would not be pleased to see Jesse Jackson return full time to such activities as voter registration, or even to leave the scene altogether.

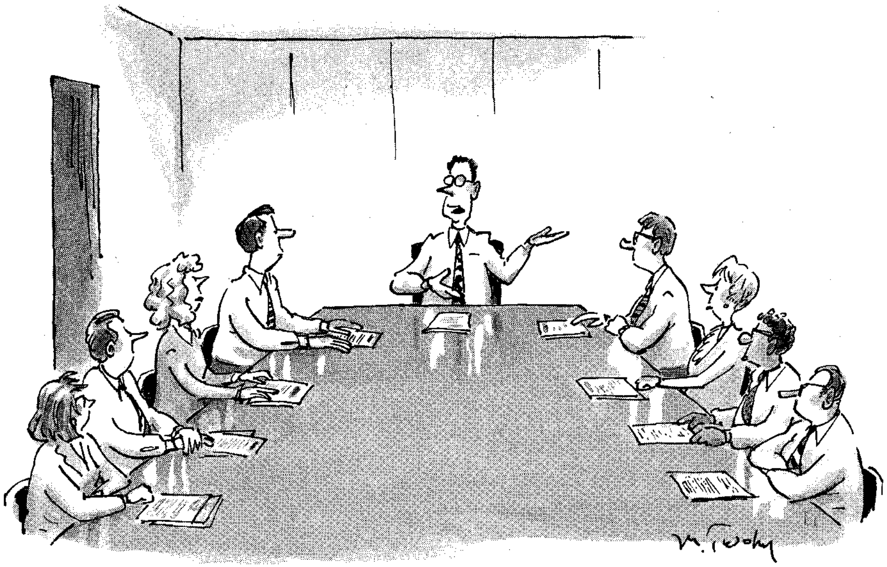
That is why the Wall Street Project was critical. If Jackson had been absent from the showcase event of his economic campaign, his disgrace might have settled in. It would have been easier for the next company targeted by Jackson to ignore him, or for corporate benefactors to withhold their largesse. There was a disturbing precedent in the case of the Reverend Benjamin Chavis, the former executive director of the N.A.A.C.P., who, in 1994, was discov-



"It's easy. The first step is to entirely change who you are."

ered to have settled a sexual-harassment and discrimination complaint with organization funds. Financial support for the organization dried up, Chavis was forced out, and the N.A.A.C.P. was left in wreckage.

Jackson needed to go to New York, which meant somehow extricating himself from his self-imposed period of penance. "You know, in our tradition," Jackson explained to me, "you can *work out* the soul salvation."



"If there's no more old business and no more new business, let's declare bankruptcy."

• •

If a pretext was needed for the truncation of Jackson's sabbatical, it presented itself in the Inauguration of George W. Bush. On the morning of the Inauguration, January 20th—the day of the rally Jackson missed in Tallahassee—several of his supporters appeared at his home in Chicago just after six, urging him to make an appearance at Rainbow/PUSH headquarters that day "just to wave my hand," he says. Jackson demurred, but the Rainbow/PUSH auditorium, a converted synagogue, was filled to capacity with Jackson followers beseeching him to come back. The Rainbow/PUSH board of directors had already accepted his apology and urged him to return to service. The next morning, Jackson, accompanied by his wife and two of their children, made a public appearance at Salem Baptist Church of Chicago, where the Reverend James Meeks, Jackson's protégé and Rainbow/PUSH's executive vice-president, declared from the pulpit that it was "time to send Reverend into the field to keep lifting up those who are at the bottom."

Jackson, seeming humbled, took to the pulpit and spoke briefly. "I want to thank my family and my wife, a virtuous woman," he said. "After thirty-eight years, five children later, Jackie, we're still here. I love you so much. Life is not a straight line—curves in the road. Some mountains and some valleys. But through it all, thank dear God, we're still here." The congregation of two thousand roared its endorsement, and after church former Representative Gus Savage, a Jackson ally who had flown in from Washington for the service, put the case directly. "We need to do everything we can to keep George W. Bush from strengthening racism and reactionism," Savage said. "The question then becomes 'Would more pressure be put on Bush by Jesse standing up . . . or Jesse sitting down?' " There was talk in the community that the Bush camp had somehow been behind the leak to the *Enquirer*. Jackson, recognizing the call for his return, said that he would be in New York for the Wall Street Project.

But Jackson felt that one more gesture was required before completing his expedited comeback. He called upon Reverend Wyatt Tee Walker, an old soldier from the movement—King's chief of staff—who is the senior pastor of Harlem's Canaan Baptist Church of Christ. Jackson wanted to conduct an evening service in Walker's church on Tuesday, January 23rd, as a prelude to opening the Wall Street event the following day. Walker had long been dubious about Jackson; he distrusted Jackson's hunger for publicity, he was suspicious of some of Jackson's business dealings, and he had been appalled by the news of Jackson's illegitimate child. Walker was also an ally of the Reverend Al Sharpton, who had designated himself Jackson's successor in the role of national leadership. But these factors in some way made Jackson's appearance at Canaan Baptist—perhaps the most important church in black New York—all the more valuable. Jackson persisted, and Walker, who planned to be away on the night in question, agreed, but only under strict conditions. The service would have to be a "service of penance," not celebration; it was to be conducted by Sharpton, not by Jackson; and if Jackson spoke at all he was to apologize for his behavior and ask for prayer. There was to be no press, Walker said, and no politicians.

The event became another Jesse Jackson pep rally. The service was broadcast on live television and Jackson uttered no word of contrition or regret. Among the several politicians in attendance was Representative Charles Rangel, of Harlem, who alone broached the subject of the scandal but only to admonish people to "get over it!" Walker was livid, and in a letter to Jackson, which was printed in the *Village Voice*, wrote, "You disrespected me, my pulpit and my people. . . . The bottom line, in my view, is that you cannot help yourself. Your addiction to the need of media attention seems to be fatal and you have fallen into the practice of *using* people for your advantage and personal aggrandizement. . . . You did not keep your word about taking some form of *sabbatical* as a symbol of penance. I fear that you have damaged your credibility beyond repair."

Walker demanded a public apology from Jackson, and was still angry when I spoke with him several months later. "I thought he made a terrible error by not absenting himself from public life for some reasonable period of time," Walker said. "Seventy-two hours later, he was right back in the fray again. It looked like he dismissed in cavalier fashion his responsibility as a Christian person. . . . All of the thinking pastors that I know, all of the serious pastors that I know, feel that way. His credibility with the clergy across this land has been terribly scarred, greatly diminished. And it didn't begin with this event. It had begun to diminish before this."

When I asked Jackson about Walker's disappointment, he shrugged and explained that he had already done a contrition appearance the Sunday before in Reverend Meeks's church in Chicago. "I couldn't make it a road show," he said.

Jackson had made his way back into public life in less than a week. It hadn't been an especially graceful reëntry, but it was a profitable one. The Wall Street Project yielded an estimated $2.1 million in donations for Jackson's Citizenship Education Fund.

Those early, adulatory demonstrations of support for Jackson had come in papered houses, but Reverend Walker's angry rebuke in New York suggested the disaffection felt by many outside Jackson's sphere.

Aside from the consistent criticism of some conservative journalists, such as the *Post's* Rod Dreher and Fox's Bill O'Reilly, Jackson had long enjoyed a relatively indulgent press; indeed, the Jackson family had relied upon the press to keep the existence of Jackson's new baby a secret. "There are a number of reporters who had knowledge of my new little sister," Jesse, Jr., told me; they thought of Reverend Jackson, "That's a private person, someone who wasn't running for public office," he said, adding that it was "essentially a family issue." But, once the scandal broke, Jackson found himself, and especially his financial operations, subject to an unfamiliar level of scrutiny. It was reported that his lover, Karin Stanford, had received a six-figure salary and severance from Jackson's Citizenship Education Fund in 1999, an expenditure not reported on tax returns. Several news organizations undertook investigations of Jackson's economic campaigns, trying to connect the dots between his protests and financial support from companies he'd targeted. Jackson's weekly television talk show, "Both Sides," was cancelled by CNN.

Some of the most damaging assessments came from influential black journalists in the mainstream press. Cynthia Tucker, the editorial-page editor of the Atlanta *Journal-Constitution*, who had praised Jackson for his efforts to expose voting irregularities in Florida, now questioned his credibility. "Well known for his 'I Am Somebody' speeches, in which he urges kids to claim a powerful sense of self-esteem, Jackson has now offered them a model as out-of-wedlock father," Tucker wrote. "That's the last thing black kids need." Jack E. White, writing in *Time*, flatly announced the end of the Jesse Jackson era of leadership. "It's time to give him another gold Rolex, thank him for his service and send him out to pasture," White wrote. "To appropriate one of Jackson's slogans, his time has gone."

If there was a time to displace Jesse Jackson, this was it, and if there was anyone inclined to do it, it was Jackson's onetime protégé and determined emulator, Reverend Al Sharpton. The portly, extravagantly coiffed New York agitator had learned at Jackson's knee, serving as the youth director of Operation Breadbasket, and he had taken from Jackson a blueprint for his own career. Jackson founded Operation PUSH, Sharpton founded the National Action Network; the churchless Jackson held services at his headquarters on Saturdays to avoid the resentment of local pastors, the churchless Sharpton did the same; Jackson started the Wall Street Project, Sharpton started the Madison Avenue

I SAW YOU WALKING

I saw you walking through Newark Penn Station
in your shoes of white ash. At the corner
of my nervous glance your dazed passage
first forced me away, tracing the crescent
berth you'd give a drunk, a lurcher, nuzzling
all comers with ill will and his stench, but
not this one, not today: one shirt arm's sheared
clean from the shoulder, the whole bare limb
wet with muscle and shining dimly pink,
the other full-sheathed in cotton, Brooks Bros.
type, the cuff yet buttoned at the wrist, a
parody of careful dress, preparedness—
so you had not rolled up your sleeves yet this
morning when your suit jacket (here are
the pants, dark gray, with subtle stripe, as worn
by men like you on ordinary days)
and briefcase (you've none, reverse commuter
come from the pit with nothing to carry
but your life) were torn from you, as your life
was not. Your face itself seemed to be walking,
leading your body north, though the age
of the face, blank and ashen, passing forth
and away from me, was unclear, the sandy
crown of hair powdered white like your feet, but
underneath not yet gray—forty-seven?
forty-eight? the age of someone's father—
and I trembled for your luck, for your broad,
dusted back, half shirted, walking away;
I should have dropped to my knees to thank God
you were alive, o my God, in whom I don't believe.

—*Deborah Garrison*

Initiative, aimed at the advertising industry. Most notably, Sharpton shared with Jackson a limitless appetite for media attention, though in his early days the spotlight tended to fall on his flaws. His occasional recklessness, as in his championing of Tawana Brawley in the nineteen-eighties, as well as his antic nature, caused him to be cast for a time as just another clown in New York's political circus.

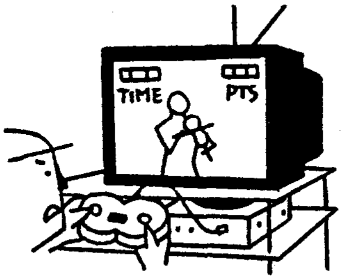
Recently, however, Sharpton had shown signs of a political maturity and effectiveness which could not be dismissed. Sharpton's instinct for new battlefields led him to successful protests against racial profiling and police brutality, and, with Jackson maimed by scandal, it seemed that Sharpton's moment was at hand.

In April, Sharpton accepted a challenge from the fundamentalist Baptist preacher Jerry Falwell to speak out against the enslavement of black Christians in Sudan. It has been a tricky issue for American black leaders, perhaps because of a reluctance to equate Sudanese slavery, which exists in the chaotic context of a protracted civil war, with the systematized oppression of South African apartheid or American slavery. Sharpton declined to allow such distinctions to prevent him from denouncing an absolute moral wrong, and in doing so he exposed other black leaders, and especially Jackson, to the charge of hypocrisy. The *Post* delighted in juxtaposing Sharpton, who was sleeping on the ground in tsetse-fly-infested southern Sudan, with Jackson, who at that moment was checking into the Fairmont San Jose, a four-star hotel, for the opening of his Silicon Valley Project.

Within a month, Sharpton was in the news again, taking center stage in the protest over United States Navy maneuvers and bombing exercises on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. Concerns about consequences to human health (nine thousand people live on the island) and the environment have inspired local protest for years, but the accidental killing of a civilian Puerto Rican guard by a stray bomb in 1999 intensified the protest and attracted new media attention. Vieques has become an almost mandatory stop for politicians from New York, with its huge Puerto Rican population, and civil disobedience on the island's restricted military grounds a commonplace gesture. On May 1st, Sharpton was arrested on Vieques, along with three political allies—City Councilman Adolfo Carrión, Jr., State Assemblyman José Rivera, and Bronx County Democratic Party Chairman Roberto Ramírez. Sharpton, who had an arrest record for prior civil disobedience, was given a stiff ninety-day sentence. As the four New Yorkers were led away in handcuffs and shackles, Sharpton noticed the whirring cameras and told his comrades, "Don't walk fast. Let the cameras get their shots. This will win Vieques."

Sharpton was right, as usual, in his news judgment. There was abundant coverage of the "Vieques Four," who began serving their sentences on May 23rd. Within a week, Sharpton began a prison fast, which triggered another round of coveted news coverage (albeit with a certain strain of lampoonery). Two weeks later, when President Bush announced that the Navy would leave Vieques by 2003, it was difficult to deny Sharpton some measure of credit.

Sharpton was making all the right moves in his campaign to unseat Jackson, an ambition he never expressly stated but never left in doubt. When I visited Sharpton in prison in July, he evinced a jolly regard for his old friend and mentor, but made clear his belief that Jackson's time had passed. Sharpton noted pointedly that while he was leading protests in the street over the past two or three years, "others" had comfortably settled at the feet of power and money. "If all you do is Wall Street, if all you do is the insider stuff, then the guy in the street who's not on Wall Street, the guy on the street who's not on the inside, is disaffected from the movement," he said. "So then a leader emerges from them. . . . I think in many ways people are responding to the fact that this movement is not personal. If you don't serve a function, God will choose someone else and keep on going. And I *learned* that from Reverend Jackson."



Even Sharpton's decision to explore a Presidential run is an elbow thrown at Jackson, spiritual counsellor to a President who moved the Democratic Party to the right and who oversaw the undoing of the welfare program. "The former activists have become the palace guards of the corporate Democratic Party," Sharpton said. "They are protecting people doing what they fought against twenty years ago. I'm doing what they taught me! The question is not, What am I doing. The question is, What are *you* doing? I thought y'all *believed* this when y'all taught me this when I was a teen-ager."

Jackson's place as a Democratic insider, however, is something he plainly cherishes, as was evident on a day he visited Capitol Hill in early June. He was one of Senator Tom Daschle's earliest appointments on the morning of Daschle's first full day as Senate Majority Leader, and during the limousine ride to the Hill Jackson was ebullient. "Part of what you work for is to have the access to enforce the priorities of public policymaking," he explained. "That's part of what the real deal is."

If there is one group outside the Rainbow/PUSH sphere which is unquestioningly loyal to Jackson in his time of distress, it is the national Democratic leadership, and with reason. As the Party chairman, Terry McAuliffe, explained to his staff during a meeting with Jackson, "Without this man we wouldn't be where we are today." Jackson's voter-registration drives and energetic campaigning were key to Al Gore's coming as close as he did, and to the Democrats' gaining a tie in the Senate, and eventual majority status. "Look here," he says, "we won Missouri, we beat Ashcroft. For *starters*."

Daschle ushered Jackson into his office and listened attentively as Jackson complained about Georgia's Democratic Senator, Zell Miller, who had committed the sacrilege of supporting President Bush's tax-cut plan. At the meeting's close, Jackson asked Daschle and his staff to hold hands as he led the group in prayer, thanking God for, among other things, having led Senator Jim Jeffords away from the Republican Party.

Jackson had similar meetings that day with Senators Christopher Dodd, of Connecticut, and Russell Feingold, of Wisconsin, and as he strolled the corridors of the Capitol, accorded a celebrity's recognition by tourists and legislators, he took it all in like tonic. Senator Dianne Feinstein, of California, embraced him. Senator Harry Reid, of Nevada, wanted Jackson to know that "I was alone on allowing felons the right to vote." Even Strom Thurmond greeted him warmly. "Brother Strom!" Jackson said. "My homeboy!"

But even here Jackson could not completely escape reference, intentional or otherwise, to his recent embarrassment. As he pressed through a throng of enthusiastic tourists grabbing his hand and asking him to pose for photographs, there came a shout from one visitor, who asked, "Hey, Jesse, how's your new baby doin'?" And later, as Jackson stood outside the Senate floor, Senator Patrick Leahy, of Vermont, rushed up to greet him and, plainly intending casual bonhomie, slapped him on the back, saying, "Hey, Reverend! You behavin' yourself, boy?" Jackson smiled tightly and said nothing.

To Al Sharpton, Jackson's easy comfort within the halls of power is simply another indication that he has lost his edge, and he is fond of likening Jackson to an aging former champion. "If you want to be comfortable, you should do what Muhammad Ali did," Sharpton says. "You should get a ringside seat and watch the fight. But you ought not hang in the ring."

In truth, there have been moments when it seemed that Jackson is not quite as light on his feet as he once was. As the year began, Jackson announced a ten-point agenda that included fighting for affirmative action and against school vouchers, but did not mention racial profiling, Vieques, or Sudan. After Sharpton went to Sudan, Jackson issued a policy statement on the subject, which fell into a news void. When Sharpton was in Sudan, Jackson telephoned the national-security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, and offered to go to China to negotiate the release of the twenty-four American aircrew members stranded after their collision with a Chinese fighter jet. Jackson was prepared to apologize, as China was demanding. Colin Powell returned Jackson's call, declining his offer.

Then, over Easter weekend, when violence erupted in Cincinnati after the shooting of a black youth by police, Jackson offered to go to Ohio to help bring calm. He was told by a local minister that his visit was not necessary, and that things were under control. Al Sharpton, who had cut short his trip to Sudan, was already there.

On a flight on the Delta Shuttle one afternoon in early June, Jackson's national field director, Gary Flowers, handed him a stack of that day's newspapers. On top was a copy of the Spanish-language paper *El Diario/La Prensa*, which carried a huge front-page color photograph of Al Sharpton, weeping. The caption read "*Lágrimas por Vieques*" ("Tears for Vieques"). Jackson grunted, and dropped the paper to the floor.

Jackson consistently declined to be drawn into a contest with Sharpton ("All this talk about trying to determine who the leader is, and all this campaigning, is so trivial"), but that is not to say that he did not notice Sharpton's challenge.

Jackson couldn't really complain about Sharpton's publicity; working the news media was one of the skills Sharpton had learned from Jackson. But the attention (and the credit) that Sharpton was getting for Vieques had to be galling. Jackson had first engaged the issue more than a decade earlier, during one of his Presidential runs, and he'd been to Vieques as recently as 1999, when he'd urged his friend Bill Clinton to change American policy. The international stage was Jackson's venue: he had negotiated with Castro and Milosevic and Saddam Hussein; in 1984, he had gained the release of a hostage in Syria. It was part of what distinguished him from the Al Sharptons of the world.

That is why Jackson kept trying to angle his way into the Vieques story. And he was about to find a route that the press could hardly ignore.

A new acquaintance is apt to confront in Jacqueline Jackson two distinct personas, each quite formidable. One is highly formal and mannered, regal, with a sonorous diction that is the work

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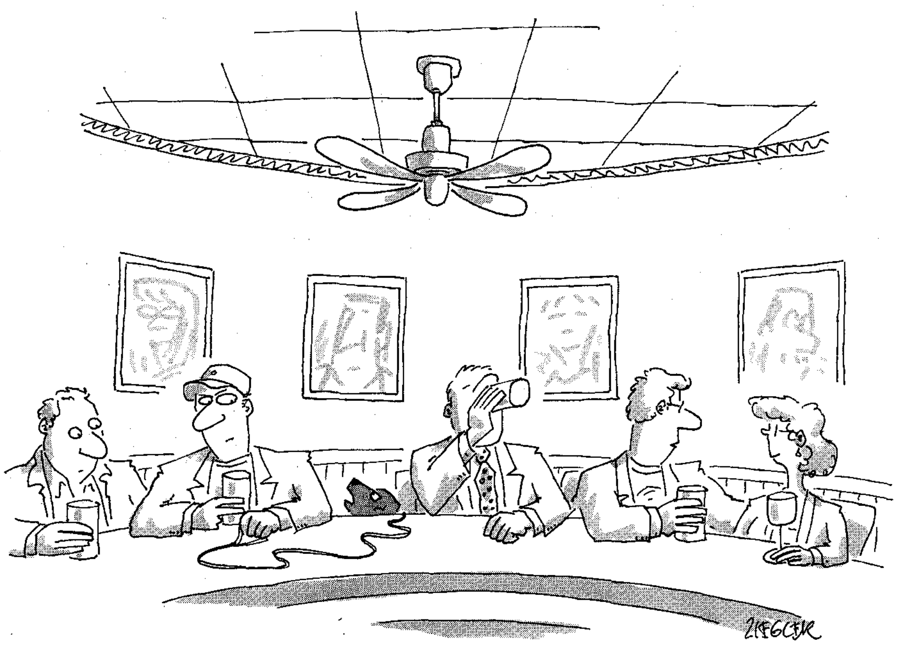
SHOWCASE

FULL COLORS

The flag is everywhere now: on lapels and roadside mailboxes, on bicycles and baby strollers, on hard hats and batting helmets, on taxis and cop cars and garbage trucks; in bodega and boutique windows, on bandannas around the necks of Labs and mutts; in festoons outside the window of a possible drug hangout on Douglass Street in Brooklyn; and, gleamingly, on the icing of a cake in the window of a bakery at 105th Street and Broadway. American-flag proliferation is defiant in harsh times like these, exuberant in victory, and brilliantly varietal in between. In a new album, "Long May She Wave: A Graphic History of the American Flag" (Ten Speed Press), Old Glory can be found on poker chips and tin windup toys and Zippo lighters, on hockey uniforms (the N.H.L.'s bygone New York Americans), on political campaign buttons of every party and persuasion, and, above a swastika, on a pro-Nazi postcard prior to the Second World War. There has been flag art (Jasper Johns) and artifact (Presidential cigar bands), and much more, including a ravishing Stars and Stripes woven into a rug advertising the Navajo Chevrolet Company, of Gallup, New Mexico. Protesting antiwar Berkeley students in 1968 produced a placard that deployed bombers for stars and rifles for stripes, while the Union general Benjamin (The Beast) Butler, at the end of the Civil War, went into the flag and bunting business. Unifying and single-minded for brief stretches, the American flag has proved too large and restless to stand for one thing for long. Its broad iconography inspires smiles and room for hope down the line, when the flag will again become less visible and more private in its intimations—not just ours but mine.

—*Roger Angell*

COURTESY TEN SPEED PRESS



"Hey! You call this a walk?"

• •

of exaggerated correctness. The other is a robust, feisty, wrought-up woman, quick to laugh or deal an elbow to the ribs. It was this Mrs. Jackson whom I encountered when her husband introduced us one morning at their home in Washington.

"Oh, Jesus Christ, Jesse! A *writer*? Oh, Jesus, Jesse, what's wrong with you!"

Fixing her intense brown eyes on me, she asked, "You're not working for the *National Enquirer*, are you?"

It was possible to imagine this Jackie Jackson capable of some of the things I'd heard tales about—brandishing a gun at her husband when she heard about his love child, angrily confronting Karin Stanford at the Washington Rainbow/PUSH office, tossing Jackson out of the house in Chicago, so that he had to retreat across the street to Jesse, Jr.,'s sofa.

But she did have reason to be wary. The week we met, the *National Enquirer* was on the newsstand with a "World Exclusive" cover story headlined "JESSE JACKSON DIVORCE TELL-ALL," which reported that Reverend Jackson meant to leave Jackie and marry Karin Stanford, and help raise his new child. Jackson told me he wouldn't dignify the story with comment, except to say that it was "absolutely false" and that he was particularly upset with the quotes attributed to his wife regarding Stanford ("Who does that bitch think she is?").

There had been such challenges to the Jackson marriage before, if none quite so publicly humiliating, and Jackie had long since accommodated herself to them. When she and Jesse were younger, she heard stories linking him romantically to Nancy Wilson and Roberta Flack; she said then that she didn't own Jesse, and that she was always glad that he came home to her. When they were older, and he was running for President, she told a reporter that if there were stories about his womanizing she didn't want to hear them. Now that Jackson has turned sixty and has a two-year-old child by another woman, Jackie says, "I love my husband, through thick and thin. When I married, I married for . . . What is it that they told me? 'For better or worse, until death do us part.' "

Politically, Jackie Jackson has always been the family radical, going back to her courtship days with Jesse on the campus of North Carolina A. & T., when he used to worry that some of her notions, such as arguing that Red China should be admitted as an observer to the United Nations, would dismay her professors. Her political advice to her husband is almost always leftward of the course to which he is inclined, and she says that she is sometimes embarrassed by his conservatism. She met with Yasir Arafat in the nineteen-seventies, and returned home to urge her friend Andy Young, then the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, to do the same (and when Young met with a P.L.O. representative, Jimmy Carter fired him).

Her philosophy about marriage and family, however, is quite traditional and Southern. Her younger daughter, Jacqueline, Jr., a strikingly attractive and intelligent young woman, has just completed a master's degree in biology and is weighing her career options. Mrs. Jackson told me several times that her first priority for her daughter is "to find her a husband—every woman should have a husband."

Like Hillary Clinton, Jacqueline Jackson has stood by her man. But, unlike Mrs. Clinton, Mrs. Jackson has never ridiculed the idea. On the contrary, she sees unconditional loyalty as every woman's duty. "I hope that in my behavior I can teach other married women about loyalty and being very responsible for her flock," she says. "And that's my strength."

"See, let me tell you about woman, and where my God is in woman," Jacqueline said one morning over breakfast. "When we think about children, you'll have some privileged women today talking about the sameness of roles. We don't have the same roles. God chose me, selected me, for the seed to be planted in me because God trusts me. And not only places the seed in me, made sure that I housed it for nine months. So I was stuck! You know, a man gets up and he goes on running. And then, after I give birth to this child, God places milk to feed it in my breasts for maybe two or three years. So it's like, what are you talking about, sharing the roles? A man has nothing to do with that. *Nothing* to do with that! It's on us. . . . This career-woman thing—and I know the demands of the workforce, but children are wanting. So, even though I am an advocate of equal rights for women, we have to handle these liberties and these freedoms with caution."

Such a philosophy may have been necessary to a life spent with Jesse Jackson, who has been away far more often than he has been home. Jackie put aside her own interests and raised her children—polished and accomplished young adults who are, as their father is the first to admit, Jackie's grand achievement.

But, with the children grown and Jesse still mostly away, when the current crisis arrived there was real concern in the family about the Jackson marriage. Jesse, Jr., was so concerned that he tried to assist in a reconciliation, inviting his parents along on double dates with him and his wife, Sandra. Jackie hated it. "It's horrible!" she says, laughing. "I don't have fun on the double dates, I don't! He said, 'Mother, I want you and Daddy to start going to the movies.' I said, 'He sleeps in the movies. I don't want to go to the movies with him.' "

But then a political friend posed a far more effective means of reconciliation: Jackie would join the Vieques protest and go to jail.

On the hot Sunday morning of June 24th, Jesse Jackson relaxed in the courtyard of the Hotel El Convento, in Old San Juan, taking in the tropical sun and chuckling loudly over an item in the morning newspaper. It was a photograph of his wife, dressed as if she were going shopping, pushing through the thick underbrush of Vieques, on her way to being arrested. "Freedom fighter, comin' through the jungle!" Jackson said with a hard laugh. "That's a classic, isn't it?"

Almost nothing about Jackie's protest and arrest had gone according to plan, which was partly why Jackson was enjoying himself so. Had events occurred as planned, Jackson himself would not have come to Puerto Rico, and he would have missed the chance to choreograph a piece of political theatre that perfectly suited his campaign to overcome his disgrace.

It was Luis Gutierrez, a congressman representing the Chicago area and an ally of Jackson's, who suggested sending Jackson's wife to Vieques as a way of directing the spotlight away from Sharpton. "Very clearly, I thought Jackie was a much better person to go down there," Gutierrez recalls. "We don't have to get into a conversation about 'Is the Reverend doing this because Al Sharpton did it?' "

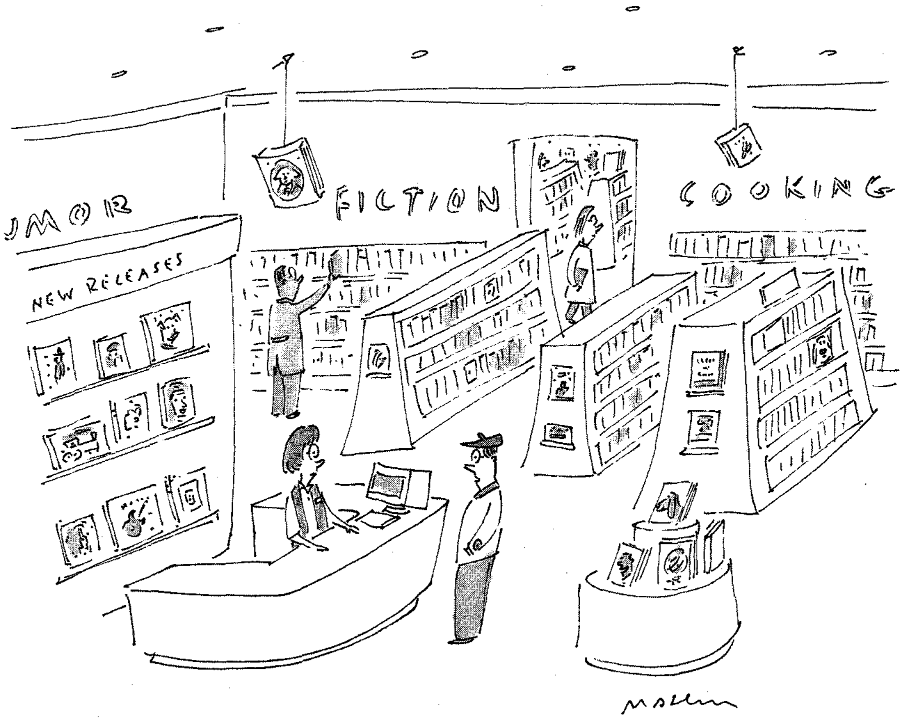
The plan was for Jackie to travel to Puerto Rico on Father's Day, June 17th, meet with local activists, and prepare for the protest the next day. Gutierrez had a specific checklist prepared. He advised Jackie to wear jeans and sneakers for the rough terrain of Vieques. He told her that she must try to get arrested by one o'clock, so that she could be processed in time to catch the last ferry back to the main island. Payment of her three-thousand-dollar bail had already been arranged. Once back in San Juan, she would spend the night and, on Tuesday, fly home to Chicago, where she would join her husband for a long-planned trip to South Africa later in the week.

"She's not an easy woman to brief," Gutierrez recalls. "I'm briefing her, she's telling me, 'I'm a grown woman, I know what I'm doing'—that kind of attitude. And I said, 'O.K.' "

Three days before Jackie left for Puerto Rico, President Bush deflated some of the protest's potential by announcing the end of military exercises on Vieques by 2003. Jackie pressed ahead anyway, and on Monday, June 18th, she and the others in her group made their way to Vieques, where Jackie proceeded to disregard Gutierrez's instructions. Instead of sneakers and jeans, she wore a pants suit, jewels, and what her husband calls her "cute shoes." She was not arrested until after three, which meant that she would have to spend the night on the island in a military detainment center. And when it came time to post bail she refused, insisting that as a respected stakeholder in society, she should not be asked to do so. The federal magistrate disagreed, and sent her to jail pending trial. There she refused to submit to a standard body search, and was briefly sent to special detention quarters.

Jackson, who was in California for the Wall Street West Project, cancelled his trip to South Africa and flew to San Juan. He arrived with an entourage that included Yusef, Jonathan, and Jackie, Jr., his scheduler, John Mitchell, and the New York attorney Charlie King. He took El Convento's twelve-hundred-dollar-a-night Vanderbilt suite (the hotel's best, reduced to seven hundred and fifty dollars a night for the Reverend), converted the suite's large dining room into a temporary office, and started working the phones. He called allies in Washington and reporters in New York, and helped direct a Vieques protest rally in Chicago via teleconference.

In San Juan, local activists scheduled more interviews, a trip to Vieques, and a private meeting between Jackson and



"What's that book everybody's listening to?"

the sympathetic governor of Puerto Rico, Sila Calderón. (The meeting with the Governor, however, produced another unintended moment of awkwardness, when Calderón sweetly asked Jackson, "How many children do you have?" Jackson stared at the ceiling for a moment, then answered, "Five.") Jackson told reporters that Jackie's arrest had raised the Vieques protest "to a new level." Now it was no longer just about Vieques but about the treatment of federal prisoners. Her refusal to undergo a body search, Jackson said, "is a real soccer-mom issue." He took to referring to Jackie by her prison identification number, Inmate No. 22113-069.

At a press conference outside the prison, Jackson declared, "Vieques is now the center of the world."

It was an unfamiliar position for Jackson, playing a supporting role for his wife, but he clearly delighted in it. "This is my preachin'," he said to me one afternoon, after speaking to reporters outside the San Juan courthouse. Jackson's church is the public square; his vision of the Cross, he says, is "people of faith fighting unjust law." That other vision of the Cross, the one focussing upon sin and salvation, is that of the sort of preacher who Jackson believes is most inclined to condemn him for his errors. He returned to the subject of mercy and grace again that evening, as the hotel masseuse set up a massage table in his suite. "On our best day, without the addition of mercy and grace, we couldn't do it. Without the grace and mercy, you tryin' to figure how long can you conceal your sins. You can have conviction without bein' self-righteous or judgmental. Because 'But for the grace of God go I.' 'Let those who would obtain mercy be merciful.' "

Jackie got a quick trial date and a relatively light sentence—ten days—which meant that she had to return to jail for only one more night after her conviction. Sitting across the aisle from Jackson in court as she awaited sentencing, Jackie blew him a kiss. Jackson wept as she was sentenced, and then stood as she returned to her seat.

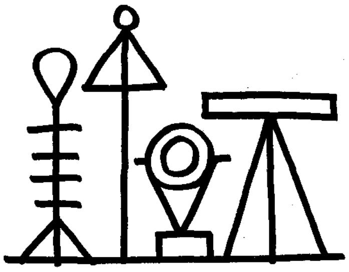
When I next saw Jackie, several weeks later, in Washington, she seemed like a person transformed, and like someone entirely inclined to grant the mercy and grace that her husband sought. She said that she would encourage her husband to continue to speak to young black men about responsibility and self-esteem, despite his own transgression. "He will have a different message," she said, "and it will be a much *richer* message, and a more helpful message. Because he is more. He's a good man, he's a sinner, he's a leader—the *truth* of him will be richer."

She said that once her husband and Karin Stanford work out the details of a support agreement (Stanford is reported to be asking for four thousand dollars a month and a life-insurance policy on Jackson), she would like Ashley to begin to become part of the Jackson family. "The sad thing is—because we do have a code of ethics, a way to behave—I'm with mixed emotions as to how to try to ease some of this pain that this child will experience. Because there is going to be some pain."

"I love my husband very much," she added. "This is something that has happened. I don't see experiences as 'good' and 'bad.' We have a child here. I wish the child well. I wish the child's mother well. I have a husband, and a family. And eventually maybe she'll get one."

Jackie's Vieques episode seemed to lift Jackson, and to change his luck. It helped immensely that he was now able to have his wife at his side in a role other than that of the wronged woman. Before Vieques, their appearances together had the quality of a Bill and Hillary Clinton hand-holding stroll during the Monica Lewinsky period. Now Jackson was able to turn to Jackie and introduce her to a crowd as "that prisoner of war, just released from jail, Jackie Jackson!"

Jackie's transformation helped, but nothing was more important to Jackson's revival than a corporation he had declared to be racially insensitive and intolerably discriminatory in its business practices: Toyota.



Last spring, at the peak of Al Sharpton's waxing and Jackson's waning, Jackson journeyed to the industrial Los Angeles suburb of Torrance, headquarters of Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. He informed Toyota officials that he was considering the possibility of leading a boycott against the company because of a pattern of insensitivity, as manifested in an aborted promotional campaign for one of Toyota's sport-utility vehicles, the RAV4.

Toyota's offense had been the result of an almost comical corporate attempt at being hip, the distribution of free postcards promoting the RAV4 to the "young and very trendy audience" it was targeting. The postcard featured the closeup smile of a dark-skinned man on whose front tooth was appliquéd, in gold, a tiny RAV4. Toyota's foray into tooth art, fashionable in some corners of the black community, was distributed in clubs, coffeehouses, "and other establishments favored by the young and style-conscious," according to a company release.

Jackson denounced the promotional postcard as a ghetto stereotype, saying, "The only thing missing is a watermelon." He announced a deadline of June 20th for Toyota to redeem itself, and said that a good start would be to spend some of its nearly half-billion-dollar advertising budget on minority advertising firms (the names of which he would be happy to provide). Toyota had been with Saatchi & Saatchi for thirty years, a relationship that Jackson called a "monopolistic dynasty." He also suggested that Toyota might want to address its "trade deficit" with minorities, reflected in the fact that, of its nearly fourteen hundred U.S. dealerships, less than five per cent were minority-owned.

In the meantime, Jackson said, he would organize a series of informational pickets against Toyota in ten cities across the country.

It was a remarkable act of bravado on Jackson's part, not least because he had no obvious claim to the issue—Toyota had cancelled the campaign four days before it even heard from Jackson. In challenging Toyota, Jackson had posed for himself a decisive test of his credibility. If Toyota defied Jackson, the next wayward corporate citizen

"Hi. I'm the babysitter, formerly with Action Data Systems."

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could be dealing with Al Sharpton.

The initial reaction by Toyota executives was that of all corporate officials when first accused by Jackson of intolerance: disappointment and hurt. The company issued a statement pointing out that Toyota had already pulled the postcard campaign. Toyota was proud of its "culture of inclusion," reflected in the fact that it had increased minority dealers by thirty-seven per cent in three years. The company's ratio of minority dealerships was the second highest in the industry, and had increased more than twenty per cent since 1998. In sum, Toyota was "disappointed that Reverend Jackson has focused on a regrettable error in creative judgement and overlooked a solid overall record of proactive, continuous progress and Toyota's ongoing commitment to diversity."

But, inevitably, the company entered into negotiations with Jackson. To help prevent a boycott, Toyota was offered the diversity-consulting services of an associate of Jackson's.

By June, as the deadline neared, Jackson saw enough progress in the negotiations to announce a postponement of the boycott. The new deadline he set, August 1st, upped the stakes for both sides, because it came on the eve of Jackson's showcase annual event, the Rainbow/PUSH convention, where either a boycott or a resolution would be showily announced. He was taking Toyota to the very edge.

When the convention opened, Jackson announced that a deal had been struck. It was an agreement of staggering arithmetic, numbers guaranteed to bring headlines, such as the one in the *Times:* "TOYOTA EARMARKS $8 BILLION FOR DIVERSIFICATION EFFORTS."

Toyota had agreed to spend $7.8 billion on minority training programs, dealership development, and dealings with minority-owned ad agencies, law firms, suppliers, consultants, and asset-management companies. Jackson provided Toyota with a list of minority firms associated with his own trade bureau, but assured Toyota that it was under no obligation to choose from his list.

That afternoon, Toyota's chief operating officer, James Press, appeared with Jackson on Fox's afternoon financial-news program. Asked whether Toyota had felt pressured by Jackson, Press said, "I would say absolutely not. The reality is he held a mirror up, and we were able to see what we were doing right, and what we could do more."

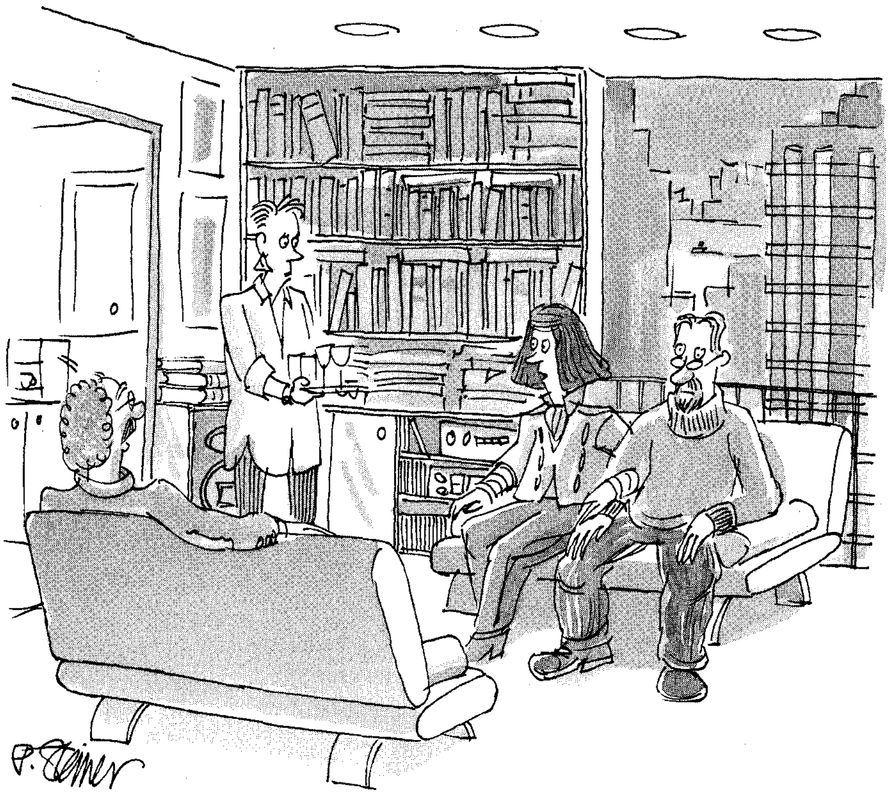
When Jackson was asked whether Toyota could be expected to make a donation to Rainbow/PUSH, he replied, "Well, that's not part of the agreement, but, of course, we deserve it. I mean, our staff did negotiating, did the research, did the organizing."

In the end, Toyota had arrived at the same business decision that so many companies had before, that the Jesse Jackson seal of moral approval was worth the cost of an agreement with him. And, despite the impressive sound of the numbers involved, Toyota's expenditure will come over a ten-year period and will include funding for all the programs that the company had in place anyway.

What was important about the deal, though, was the picture of Jackson with a compliant and contrite corporate giant. To that scene were added over the next few days the images of Tom Daschle ("Brother Daschle!") and Bill Clinton taking the Rainbow/PUSH stage alongside Jackson. As an A.P. dispatch phrased it, "In the space of a week, Jackson showed he could still attract leaders of industry and politics, broker huge financial deals and grab headlines." The picture of redemption was complete.

When I saw Jackson several weeks later, on the morning of September 27th, he seemed like a man wholly renewed. Sitting behind his desk at the Washington headquarters of Rainbow/PUSH, in a converted brick town house in Georgetown (where Karin Stanford once worked), Jackson was on the telephone giving a radio interview, with another interviewer on hold. His cell phone chimed for his attention. This was Jesse Jackson at his essence, alive with purpose: he had managed to place himself squarely in the biggest story of the new century.

The day before, Jackson had announced that he'd received a surprise invitation from Afghanistan's ruling Taliban to lead a peace delegation to that country. He said that he had no plans to go, but he was already at work putting together a "credible" peace delegation, just in case. Now the world awaited his next move. He had begun the morning with an appearance on Don Imus's program, followed by an interview on CNN with the father of a Christian aid worker held by the Taliban, who beseeched Jackson to intervene. He had spoken to the national-security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, and twice to Secretary of State Colin Powell; both had discouraged a Jackson mission, he said, but had done so in tones of "mutual respect."



"We're still getting used to feeling patriotic."

Aides scurried in and out of Jackson's office. Someone from ABC News had inquired about a possible appearance on "Prime Time Live." "What's that, Diane Sawyer?" Jackson asked. "Why don't you try to find out?"

Bill Clinton called, seemingly to discourage a Jackson mission, suggesting that his friend could make his appeal to the Taliban without leaving the United States. "He thinks there's a way we can do an awful lot without necessarily going," Jackson said. Dick Grasso, the chairman of the New York Stock Exchange, telephoned, saying that if Jackson went to Afghanistan with a peace delegation he wanted in. "You're serious about that?" Jackson asked. "I'll let you know, buddy."

A few minutes later, when Jackson dialled the number of Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations came right to the phone. "Brother Kofi," Jackson said. "How you doin', buddy?" Jackson told Annan about the invitation he'd received from the Taliban, and said, "I think you should at least consider going over there."

Jackson returned a call from Lloyd Grove, who writes "The Reliable Source" column for the Washington *Post.* Grove told Jackson that he had spoken with Mike Wallace, who said he wanted to accompany Jackson to Afghanistan for a "60 Minutes" piece. "Would you hope that Mike could accompany you?" Grove asked. "This is the first I've heard about it," Jackson replied.

And so it went throughout the day, a steady stream of consultations and interviews. There emerged a subtext to the reporters' questions, which Jackson found a bit annoying. It seemed that the Taliban spokesman, Mohammad Sohail Shaheen, had told the Afghan Islamic Press that the proposed peace mission had been Jackson's idea, not the Taliban's. "Their spokesperson called me," Jackson said, again and again. "I didn't even have their number."

Jackson repeatedly said that he didn't want to go to Afghanistan, that he had no immediate plans to go, but when CNN reported that Jackson had "no plan to go" he immediately got on the phone to the CNN executive Eason Jordan to set the record straight. ("I never said that I was not going," he said. Jordan arranged to put him on the air.)

In between calls, I asked Reverend Jackson if, given the chance, he would like to talk face-to-face with the Taliban leaders. "Of course," he replied. "Man, if I had a bunch of friends in Hell, and I could talk to the Devil and convince him to get a water sprinkler, I'd talk with him. I'd shake his hand, ask him how things were going, talk about his overcrowded conditions. I'd ask him, 'You ever seen a hose before? Use this thing with water.' I'd be attacked for talkin' with him, but if the temperature went down that'd be O.K. I'd say, 'Turn this water hose on.' "

That night, I accompanied Jackson as he flew by private jet to Orlando, where he was scheduled to address the national association of black M.B.A.s. He didn't say so, but I got the feeling that Jackson knew he would not be leading a peace mission to Afghanistan. He had heard nothing further from the Taliban, and he had begun to consider, perhaps after his talk with Clinton, that the Taliban was trying to delay American military action. He worried, too, that a Taliban negotiation for release of the Christian aid workers might serve as a smokescreen for Afghanistan's involvement with Osama bin Laden. "I just need some more information," he said.

Jackson arose early the next morning for an appearance, by satellite, on ABC's "Good Morning America." He was the first guest. "Did they invite you," the interviewer, Charles Gibson, asked, "or did you raise this issue?"

"I got a call from Mohammad Shaheen, spokesperson of the Taliban Embassy in Pakistan, asking for a peace delegation," Jackson replied. "Now, I didn't call 1-800-TALIBAN."

In fact, Jackson had initiated the proposed peace mission—at least, indirectly. He had been trying to find his voice on the issue since the day of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, at first criticizing the Administration's bellicose tone, then softening his rhetoric as the Bush team turned to coalition-building. Jackson longed for a place in the process, and, before hearing from the Taliban, he had offered his services to the Administration (which declined them).

But on the weekend after the attacks a young Jackson aide, a Pakistani-American named Nizam Arain, discussed the matter of Jackson's possible intervention with his father, a Chicago physician from a prominent Pakistani family. Dr. Arain contacted the Pakistani Embassy in Washington, which, in turn, contacted the Taliban's representative in Islamabad.

On September 25th, Jackson had visited ground zero in New York, then boarded a train for Washington. En route, he received a call from Chicago; it was Nizam Arain, who told him that Shaheen, the Taliban spokesman, was on the line. Arain took notes as Jackson and Shaheen were connected in a conference call. Shaheen told Jackson that he welcomed the prospect of a peace delegation, that he hoped a resolution could be found that would preserve dignity and honor for all sides, and that he was thankful to God "that there exist people who are willing and ready to pursue peace as an alternative to war and bloodshed." Arain typed up his notes and faxed them to Jackson's Washington office, and an aide delivered them to Jackson upon his arrival.

Jackson directed his limousine driver to take him to the Pakistani Embassy, and he read the notes on the way over. Back in Chicago, Arain was surprised when he turned on his television and saw Jackson standing in front of the Embassy, Arain's notes in hand, telling reporters about the "invitation" from the Taliban. (The A.P. report described it as a "telegram.")

In the end, Jackson said, it didn't really matter whose idea it was. The real question now was whether or not there was anything material to be gained by a trip. Between rounds at the black M.B.A. convention on Friday, September 28th, Jackson received an official invitation that bore the seal of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. It was not enough for Jackson, who by now had heard that a delegation of Pakistani clerics had come away from a meeting with the Taliban without results.

It was clear that Jackson would not be travelling to Afghanistan, although there was still life in the story. After the conference, the M.B.A. association arranged a press conference, attended by Jackson and the association's other featured guests. Every question was directed at Jackson. "If they will not talk to Pakistan," he said, "they definitely may not be ready to talk to us. This is a sign that I find unhealthy."

Jackson's brief, fevered Taliban moment was about to end, but as I watched him it occurred to me that perhaps no one except Jesse Jackson could have suggested so preposterous an idea—a citizen's peace mission to the Taliban—and be taken seriously. Jackson had been discouraged by the White House, his motives had been questioned by critics and by the press, and yet he *had* been taken seriously.

I recollected a moment from my first visit with Jackson, last spring in Chicago. After we'd talked for several hours, he summoned his limousine and gave me a tour of the South Side, stopping at the Chicago Theological Seminary, the Rainbow/PUSH headquarters, and, finally, his favorite refuge, the Division Street Bath House. His driver pulled the car onto the sidewalk, and before Jackson went in for his afternoon massage and steam he said, "I want you to hear something," and punched up a CD. It was the gospel singer Donnie McClurkin singing a song called "Stand." Jackson swayed in the front seat as McClurkin sang:

Tell me, how do you handle the guilt of your past?
Tell me, how do you deal with the shame?

As McClurkin began the chorus, Jackson slapped the dashboard, turned up the volume, and said, "This is my *theme* song."

Well, you just stand
When there's nothing left to do
You just stand
Watch the Lord see you through
Yes, after you've done all you can . . .

Then, like a preacher talking a song to a choir, Jackson turned in his seat and pronounced McClurkin's final line: "You just stand." ♦

FICTION

BOHEMIA

BY V. S. NAIPAUL

Willie Chandran went to London by ship. And everything about the journey so frightened him—the size of the country he was leaving, the crowds in the port, the number of ships in the harbor, the confidence of the people on the ship—that he found himself unwilling to speak, at first out of pure worry, and then, when he discovered that silence brought him strength, out of policy. So he looked without trying to see and heard without listening; and yet later—just as after an illness it may be possible for someone to recall everything he had at the time only half noticed—he was to find that he had stored up all the details of that stupendous first crossing.

He knew that London was a great city. His idea of a great city was of a fairyland of splendor and dazzle, and when he got to London and began walking about its streets he felt let down. He didn't know what he was looking at. The little booklets and folders he picked up or bought at Underground stations didn't help; they assumed that the local sights they were writing about were famous and well understood; and really Willie knew little more of London than the name.

The only two places he knew about were Buckingham Palace and Speakers' Corner. He was disappointed by Buckingham Palace. He thought the maharaja's palace in his own state was far grander, more like a palace, and this made him feel, in a small part of his heart, that the kings and queens of England were impostors, and the country a little bit of a sham. His disappointment turned to something like shame—at himself, for his gullibility—when he went to Speakers' Corner. He had heard of this place in the general-knowledge class at the mission school and he had written knowingly about it in more than one end-of-term examination. He expected big, radical, shouting crowds, like those his mother's uncle, the firebrand of the backward, used to address. He didn't expect to see an idle scatter of people around half a dozen talkers, with the big buses and the cars rolling indifferently by all the time. Some of the talkers had very personal religious ideas, and Willie, remembering his own home life, thought that the families of these men might have been glad to get them out of the house in the afternoons.

He turned away from the depressing scene and began to walk down one of the paths beside Bayswater Road. He walked without seeing, thinking of the hopelessness of home and his own nebulous present. All at once, in the most magical way, he was lifted out of himself. He saw, walking toward him on the path, half leaning on the stick he carried, a man famous beyond imagining, and now casual and solitary and grand among the afternoon strollers. Willie looked hard. He felt ennobled by the sight and presence of the great man.

The man was tall and slender, very dark and striking, in a formal charcoal double-breasted suit that emphasized his slenderness. His crinkly hair was combed back flat above a long, narrow face with an amazing hawklike nose. Every detail of the man approaching him answered the photographs Willie knew. It was Krishna Menon, the close friend of Mr. Nehru, and India's spokesman in international forums. He was looking down as he walked, preoccupied. He looked up, saw Willie, and out of a clouded face flashed him a friendly satanic smile. Willie had never expected to be acknowledged by the great man. And then, before he could work out what to do, he and Krishna Menon had crossed, and the dazzling moment was over.

A day or so later, in the little common room of the college, he saw in a newspaper that Krishna Menon had passed through London on his way to New York and the United Nations. He had stayed at Claridge's hotel. Willie looked at maps and directories and worked out that Krishna Menon might simply have walked that afternoon from the hotel to the park, to think about the speech he was soon going to make. The speech was to be about the invasion of Egypt by Britain and France and others.

Willie knew nothing about that invasion. The invasion had apparently been caused by the nationalization of the Suez Canal, and Willie knew nothing about that, either. He knew, from his school geography lessons, about the Suez Canal, and one of the Hollywood movies they had shown at the mission school was "Suez." But in Willie's mind neither his school geography nor "Suez" was strictly real. Neither had to do with the here and now; neither affected him or his family or his town; and he had no idea of the history of the canal or Egypt. He knew the name of Colonel Nasser, the Egyptian leader, but it was only in the way he knew about Krishna Menon: he knew about the greatness of the man without knowing about the deeds. At home he had read the newspapers, but he read them in his own way. He had learned to shut out the main stories, the ones about far-off wars or election campaigns in the United States which meant nothing to him and went on week after week and were slow and repetitive and then ended, very often quite lamely, giving, like a bad book or movie, nothing or very little for much effort and attention. So, just as on the ship Willie was able to watch without seeing and hear without listening, Willie at home for many years read the newspapers without taking in the news. He knew the big names; very occasionally he looked at the main headline; but that was all.

Now, after his sight of Krishna

Menon in the park, he was amazed at how little he knew of the world around him. He began to read about the Egyptian crisis in the newspapers, but he didn't understand what he read. He knew too little about the background, and newspaper stories were like serials; it was necessary to know what had gone before. So he began to read about Egypt in the college library, and he floundered. It was like moving very fast and having no fixed markers to give an idea of position and speed. His ignorance seemed to widen with everything he read. He turned in the end to a cheap history of the world published during the war. This he could hardly understand. It was as with the leaflets about London in the Underground stations: the book assumed that the reader already knew about famous events. Willie thought he was swimming in ignorance, had lived without a knowledge of time. He remembered one of the things his mother's uncle used to say: that the backward had been shut out for so long from society that they knew nothing of India, nothing of the other religions, nothing even of the religion of the people of caste, whose serfs they were.

His father had given him names of people he should get in touch with. Willie hadn't intended to do so. Very few of the names meant anything to him, and he wished, in London, to get by on his own. That didn't prevent him boasting of the names in the college. He dropped the names in an innocent, trying-out way, gauging the weight of each name from the way people reacted to it. And now, out of his new feeling of ignorance and shame, his developing vision of a world too big for him, Willie wrote to one of them, a journalist whose name he had seen in big letters in one of the newspapers.

The journalist replied. *Dear Chandran, Of course I remember your father. My favourite babu* . . . "Babu," an Anglicized Indian, was a mistake; the word should have been "sadhu," an ascetic. But Willie didn't mind. The letter seemed friendly. It asked Willie to come to the newspaper office, and early one afternoon a week or so later Willie made his way to Fleet Street. It was warm and bright, but Willie had been made to believe that it rained all the time in England, and he wore a raincoat. The raincoat was very thin, of a rubbery material that sweated on the very smooth inside almost as soon as it was worn; so that by the time Willie had got to the big black newspaper building the top and sides of his jacket and the back of his collar were damp, and when he took off the sweated, clinging raincoat he looked as though he had walked through a drizzle.

He gave his name to a man in uniform, and after a while the journalist, in a dark suit and not young, came down and he and Willie talked standing up in the lobby. They didn't get on. They didn't have anything to talk about. The journalist asked about the babu; Willie didn't correct him; and when they had finished that subject they both looked about them. The journalist began to talk about the newspaper in a defensive way, and Willie understood that the newspaper didn't like Indian independence and was not friendly to India, and that the journalist himself had written some hard pieces after his visit to the country.

The journalist said, "It's Beaverbrook, really. He has no time for Indians. He's like Churchill in some respects."

Willie said, "Who is Beaverbrook?"

The journalist dropped his voice. "He's our proprietor." It amused him that Willie didn't know something so stupendous.

Willie noticed, and thought, I am glad I didn't know. I am glad I wasn't impressed.

Somebody had come through the main door, which was at Willie's back. The journalist looked to one side of Willie, to follow the progress of the new arrival.

He said, with awe, "That's our editor."

Willie saw a dark-suited middle-aged man, pink-faced after lunch, going up the steps at the far side of the lobby.

The journalist, gazing at his editor, said, "His name is Arthur Christiansen. They say he is the greatest editor in the world." Then, as though speaking to himself, he said, "It takes a lot to get there." Willie looked with the journalist at the great man going up the steps. Then, setting aside that mood, the journalist said in a jokey way, "I hope you haven't come to ask for his job."

Willie didn't laugh. He said, "I'm a student. I am here on a scholarship. I am not looking for a job."

"Where are you?"

Willie gave the name of his college.

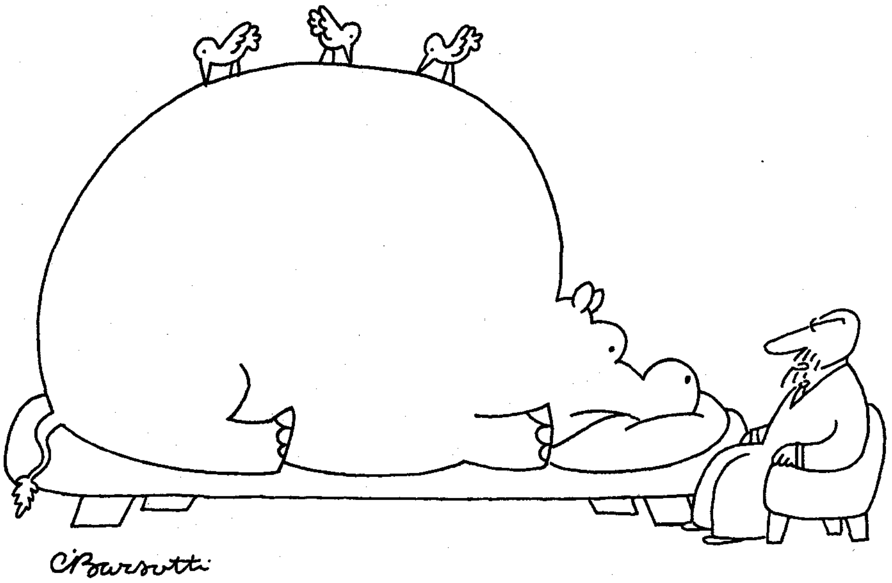
The journalist didn't know it. Willie thought, He's trying to insult me. My college is quite big and quite real.

The journalist said in his new jokey way, "Are you asthmatic? I ask only because our proprietor is asthmatic and he has a special feeling for asthmatics. If you wanted a job, it would be something in your favor."

At the college Willie had to relearn everything that he knew. He had to learn how to eat in public. He had to learn how to greet people and how, having greeted them, not to greet them all over again in a public place ten or fifteen minutes later. He had to learn to close doors behind him. He had to learn how to ask for things without being peremptory.

The college was a semi-charitable Victorian foundation and it was modelled on Oxford and Cambridge. That was what the students were often told. And because the college was like Oxford and Cambridge it was full of various pieces of "tradition" that the teachers and students were proud of but couldn't explain. There were rules, for instance, about dress and behavior in the dining hall; and there were quaint, beer-drinking punishments for misdemeanors. Students had to wear black gowns on formal occasions. When Willie asked about the gowns, he was told by one of the lecturers that it was what was done at Oxford and Cambridge, and that the academic gown was descended from the ancient Roman toga. Willie, not knowing enough to be awed, looked up the matter in various books in the college library. He read that, in spite of all the toga-clad statues from the ancient world, no one had so far been able to work out how the old Romans put on their togas. The academic gown probably was copied from the Islamic seminaries of a thousand years ago, and that Islamic style would have been copied from something earlier. So it was a piece of make-believe.

Yet something strange was happen-



"You can't let the tick birds continue to define you."

• •

ing. Gradually, learning the quaint rules of his college, with the churchy Victorian buildings pretending to be older than they were, Willie began to see in a new way the rules he had left behind at home. He began to see—and it was upsetting, at first—that the old rules were themselves a kind of make-believe, self-imposed. And one day, toward the end of his second term, he saw with great clarity that the old rules no longer bound him.

His mother's firebrand uncle had agitated for years for freedom for the backward. Willie had always put himself on that side. Now he saw that the freedom the firebrand had been agitating about was his for the asking. No one he met, in the college or outside it, knew the rules of Willie's own place, and Willie began to understand that he was free to present himself as he wished. He could, as it were, write his own revolution. The possibilities were dizzying. He could, within reason, remake himself and his past and his ancestry.

He began to alter things about himself, but in small, comfortable ways. He had no big overriding idea. He took a point here and another there. The newspapers, for instance, were full of news about the trade unions, and it occurred to Willie one day that his mother's uncle—the firebrand of the backward, who sometimes at public meetings wore a red scarf (in imitation of his hero, the famous backward revolutionary and atheistic poet Bharatidasan)—was a kind of trade-union leader, a pioneer of workers' rights. He let drop the fact in conversation and in tutorials, and he noticed that it cowed people.

His new confidence began to draw people to him. One of them was Percy Cato. Percy was a Jamaican of mixed parentage and was more brown than black. Willie and Percy, both exotics, both on scholarships, had been wary of one another in the beginning, but now they met easily and began to exchange stories of their antecedents. Percy, explaining his ancestry, said, "I think I even have an Indian grandmother." Percy put his hand on his crinkly hair and said, "The Negro is actually recessive." Willie didn't understand what Percy meant. He knew only that Percy had worked out a story to explain his own appearance. He was a Jamaican but not strictly of Jamaica. He was born in Panama and had grown up there. He said, "I am the only black man or Jamaican or West Indian you'll meet in England who knows nothing about cricket."

Willie said, "How did you get to Panama?"

"My father went to work on the Panama Canal."

"Like the Suez Canal?" It was still in the news.

"This was before the First War."

In his mission-school way Willie looked up the Panama Canal in the college library. And there it all was, in grainy, touched-up, imprecise, black-bordered photographs in old encyclopedias and annuals: the great, waterless engineering works before the First War, with gangs of faceless black workers, possibly Jamaicans, in the waterless locks. One of those black men might have been Percy's father.

He asked Percy in the common room, "What did your father do in the Panama Canal?"

"He was a clerk. You know those people. They can't read and write at all."

Willie thought, He's lying. That's a foolish story. His father went there as a laborer. He would have been in one of the gangs, holding his pickax before him on the ground, like the others, and looking obediently at the photographer.

Until then Willie hadn't really known what to make of a man who appeared to have no proper place in the world and could be both Negro and not Negro in his ways. When Percy was in his Negro mode he claimed fellowship with Willie; in the other mode he wanted to keep Willie at a distance. Now, with that picture in his head of Percy's father standing, like a soldier at ease, with both hands on the heft of his pickax in the hot Panama sun, Willie felt he knew him a little better.

Willie had been very careful with what he had told Percy about himself, and it was easier now for him to be with Percy. He felt he stood a rung or two or many rungs above Percy, and he was more willing to acknowledge Percy as the man-about-town, the man who knew more about London and Western ways. Percy was flattered, and he became Willie's guide to the city.

Percy loved clothes. He always wore a suit and a tie. His shirt collars were always clean and starched and stiff, and his shoes were always polished, with new-looking insteps and heels that were nice and solid and never worn down. Percy knew about cloth and the cut of suits and hand stitching, and he could spot these things on people as he walked. Good clothes seemed, almost, to have a moral quality for him; he respected people who respected clothes.

Willie knew nothing about clothes. He had five white shirts and—since the college laundry went off once a week—he had to keep one shirt going for two or three days. He had one tie, a burgundy-colored Tootal cotton tie that cost six shillings. Every three months he bought a new one and threw away the old one, dreadfully stained and too wrinkled to knot. He had one jacket, a light-green thing that didn't absolutely fit and couldn't hold a shape. He had paid three pounds for it at a sale of the Fifty Shilling Tailors in the Strand. He didn't think of himself as badly dressed, and it was some time before he noticed that Percy was particular about clothes and liked to talk about them. He used to wonder about this taste of Percy's. A fussiness about cloth and color was something he associated with women. It was wrong and effeminate and idle in a man. But now he thought he understood why Percy loved clothes and, more than clothes, shoes. And then he found he was wrong about the effeminacy.

Percy said one day, "My girlfriend is coming this Saturday." Women were allowed in the students' rooms on weekends. "I don't know whether you have noticed, Willie, but on weekends the college rocks with fuck."

Willie was full of excitement and jealousy, especially because of the blunt and easy way Percy had spoken. He said, "I would like to meet your girlfriend."

Percy said, "Come and have a drink on Saturday." And Willie could hardly wait for Saturday.

A little while later he asked Percy, "What is the name of your girlfriend?"

Percy said, with surprise, "June."

The name was fragrant for Willie. And later, during the same conversation, he asked as casually as he could, "What does June do?"

"She works at the perfume counter in Debenhams."

Perfume counter, Debenhams: the words intoxicated Willie. Percy noticed and, wishing to add to his grand London effect, said, "Debenhams is a big store in Oxford Street."

After a while Willie asked, "Was that where you met June? At the perfume counter in Debenhams?"

"I met her at the club."

"Club!"

"A drinking place where I used to work."

Willie was shocked, but he thought he should hide it. He said, "Of course."

Percy said, "I worked there before coming here. It was owned by a friend of mine. I can take you if you want."

They went by Underground to Marble Arch. That was where, many months before, Willie had got off to go to look for Speakers' Corner, and had had the adventure of seeing Krishna Menon. It was quite another London Willie had in mind when he and Percy made for a quiet narrow street north of Oxford Street at the back of a big hotel. The club, announced by the smallest of signs, was a shut-in, very dark room off a lobby. A black man was behind the counter, and a woman with pale hair and pale, overpowdered skin and a pale dress was sitting on a stool. They both greeted Percy. Willie was stirred, not by the beauty of the woman—she had little of that, and seemed to get older the more he looked at her—but by her coarseness, her tawdriness, by her being there in the afternoon, by her having prepared so carefully for being there, and by the very strong idea of vice. Percy ordered whiskey for both of them, though neither he nor Willie was a drinker; and they sat and didn't drink, and Percy talked.

Percy said, "I was the front-of-house man here, being smooth with the smooth and rough with the rough. It was all I could get. In a place like London, a man like me has to take what he can get. I thought one day I should ask for a piece of the business. My friend cut up rough. I thought I should leave, to save the friendship. My friend's a dangerous man."

Willie said, "And June came here one day, from the perfume counter at Debenhams?"

"It's not far away. It's an easy walk."

Willie, though not knowing where Debenhams was, tried many times to re-create in his mind that walk from Debenhams to the club.

He saw June on Saturday in Percy's room. She was a big girl in a tight skirt that showed off her hips. She filled the small room with her perfume. Willie had never known perfume like that—that mingled smell of excrement and sweat and deep, piercing, many-sided sweetness from no simple source.

They were sitting together on the small college sofa and he allowed himself to press against her, more and more, while he took in her perfume, her plucked eyebrows, the depilated but slightly bristly legs she had drawn up below her.

Percy noticed but said nothing. Willie took that as the act of a friend. And June herself was gentle and yielding, even with Percy looking on. Willie had read that gentleness and softness in her face. When the time came for him to leave June and Percy to what they had to do, he was in a state. He thought he should look for a prostitute. He knew nothing about prostitutes, but he knew the reputation of some of the streets near Piccadilly Circus. But he didn't in the end have the courage.

On Monday he went to Debenhams. The girls at the perfume counter took fright at him, and he took fright at them, powdered, unreal, with strange lashes, and looking plucked and shaved like shop chickens. But he eventually found June. In this setting of glass and glitter and artificial light—an extraordinary London, such as he had looked for in the streets when he had just arrived—she was tall and soft and coarse and quite luscious. He could scarcely bear to consider all that had stirred him on Saturday. Below black-line eyebrows and mother-of-pearl eyelids her long eyelashes swept upward. She greeted him without surprise. He was relieved, and even before he had spoken half a dozen words he saw that she understood his need and was going to be gentle with him. Even then, he found he didn't know how to press the matter, what words to use. All he could say was "Would you like to see me, June?"

She said, very simply, "Of course, Willie."

"Can we meet today? When you finish work."

"Where should we meet?"

"The club."

"Percy's old place? You have to be a member, you know." In the afternoon, he went to the club, to see whether he could join. There was no trouble. Again, puzzlingly, there was no one there, apart from the very white woman on the stool and the black barman. The barman (who was perhaps in these quiet periods doing the job Percy had done in the old days, being smooth with the smooth and rough with the rough) made Willie fill in a form. Willie then paid five pounds (he was living on seven pounds a week), and the barman—making little circles with his pen before he began to write, like a weight lifter making feints at a mighty weight on the floor before he actually lifted—took a little time to write out Willie's name on a small membership card.

He watched the street for many minutes before the appointed time, not wishing to be at the club first and then perhaps to be disappointed, and while he watched he played with pictures of June at the end of her working day getting ready somewhere and making her way from Debenhams to the club. He greeted her in the doorway when she came and they went inside, into the dark bar. The barman knew her, and the woman on the stool knew her, and Willie was pleased to be there with someone known. He bought drinks, expensive, fifteen shillings for the two, and all the while in the dark room he was smelling June's perfume and pressing against her and not paying attention to what he was saying.

She said, "We can't go to the college. Percy wouldn't like it, and I can go there only on weekends." A little later she said, "All right. We'll go to the other place. We'll have to take a taxi."

The driver made a face when she gave the address. The taxi took them away from the enchanted area of Marble Arch and Bayswater. It then turned north and very soon they were in wretched streets: big unkempt houses, without rails or fences, dustbins outside front windows. They stopped outside one such house. With the tip the fare was five shillings.

At the top of a railless flight of steps, a big, beaten-up door, with layers of old paint showing through in many places, led to a wide, dark hall smelling of old dirt, still with gas brackets on the walls. The wallpaper was almost black at the top; the linoleum on the floor ground down to no color, though with pieces of the original pattern still at the edges. The stairs at the end of the hall were wide—old style there—but the wooden bannisters were rough with grime. The landing window was unwashed and cracked, and the ground at the back was full of rubbish.

June said, "It isn't the Ritz, but the natives are friendly."

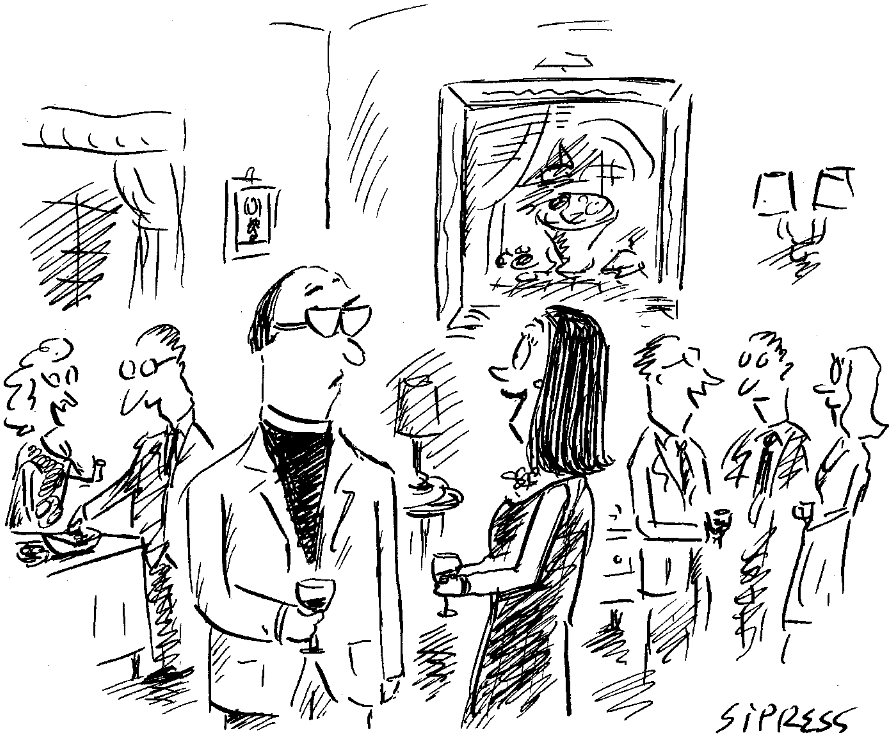
Willie wasn't so sure. Most of the doors were closed. But here and there, as they climbed—the steps narrowing—doors half opened and Willie saw the scowling, lined, yellow faces of very old women. So close to Marble Arch, but it was like another city.

The room was small, with a mattress resting on newspapers on the bare floorboards. There was a chair and a towel and a naked hanging light bulb and not much else. June undressed methodically. It was too much for Willie. He hardly enjoyed the moment. In no time at all it was over for him, after a whole weekend of planning, after all the expense, and he didn't know what to say.

June, letting his head rest on her plump arm, said, "A friend of mine says it happens with Indians. It's because of the arranged marriages. They don't feel they have to try hard. My father said his father used to tell him, 'Satisfy the woman first. Then think of yourself.' I don't suppose you had anybody telling you anything like that."

He said, "Let me try again, June."

He tried again. It lasted longer, but June didn't say anything. And then, as before, the moment was over. The toilet was at the end of the black corridor. Spiderwebs, furry with dust, covered the high, rusting cistern, and hung like a kind of material on the small window at the top. June, when she came back, dressed very carefully. Willie didn't watch her. They walked down the steps without talking. A door opened and an old woman looked hard at them. An hour ago Willie would have minded; he didn't mind now. On a landing they saw a small black man with a broad-trimmed Jamaican hat that shadowed his face. His trousers, half of a zoot suit, tight at the ankles and ballooning



"Do you think of yourself as a spiritual person?"

all down his legs, were in a thin material meant for a warmer place. He looked at them for longer than he should. They walked down the poor streets, which were very quiet, with big windows blank with sagging curtains and makeshift blinds, to where there was the light of shops and reasonable traffic, London again. No taxi for them now. A bus for June—she talked of going to Marble Arch to get a bus to a place called Cricklewood. Another bus for Willie. Going back to the college, thinking of June going home, to some place he couldn't imagine, and then, thinking of Percy, he felt the beginning of remorse. It didn't last. He kicked it aside. He found he was pleased with himself, after all. He had done a good, an immense, afternoon's work. He was a changed man. He would worry about the money side later.

When he next saw Percy he asked, "What's June's family like?"

"I don't know. I've never seen them. I don't think she likes them."

Later he went to the college library and looked at a Pelican paperback, "The Physiology of Sex." He had seen it around, but had been put off by the scientific title. The little wartime paperback was so tightly bound, with rusting metal staples, that it was hard sometimes to see the beginning of lines. He had to pull at the pages and hold the book at different angles. He came at last to what he was looking for. He read that the average man could keep going for ten to fifteen minutes. That was bad news. A line or two later it became much worse. He read that a "sexual athlete" could easily keep going for half an hour. The frivolous, gloating language—not something he expected in a serious Pelican book—was like a blow. He rejected what he had read, and read no more.

When he next saw Percy he asked, "How did you learn about sex, Percy?"

Percy said, "You have to start small. We all started small. Practicing on the little girls. Don't look so shocked, little Willie. I am sure you don't know everything that was happening in your extended family. Your trouble, Willie, is that you are too neat. People look at you and don't see you."

"You are neater than me. Always in a suit and a nice shirt."

"I make women nervous. They are frightened of me. That's the way for you, Willie. Sex is a brutal business. You have to be brutal."

"Is June frightened of you?"

"She is scared stiff of me. Ask her."

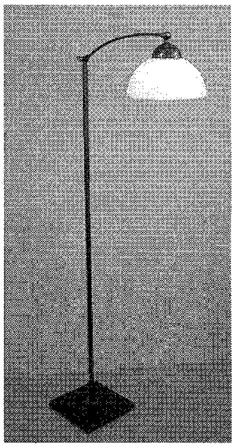
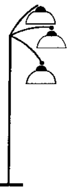
Willie thought he should tell Percy about what had happened. But he didn't know what words to use. Something from an old movie came to him, and he was on the point of saying, "June and I are in love, Percy." But he didn't like the words, and they refused to come out.

Just a week or so later he was glad he hadn't said anything. Percy—the man-about-town—took him to a party in Notting Hill one Saturday evening. Willie knew nobody there and he stuck to Percy. June came in after a while. And a little while after that Percy said to Willie, "This party is dull like hell. June and I are going back to the college to fuck."

Willie looked at June and said, "Is that true?"

She said in her simple way, "Yes, Willie."

If anybody had asked him, Willie would have said that Percy was teaching him about English life. In fact, through Percy, and without knowing what he was being introduced to, Willie was becoming part of the special, passing bohemian-immigrant life of London of the late nineteen-fifties. This hardly touched the traditional bohemian world of Soho. It was a little world on its own. The immigrants, from the Caribbean, and then the white colonies of Africa, and then Asia, had just arrived. They were still new and exotic; and there were English people both high and low, with a taste for social adventure, a wish from time to time to break out of England, and people with colonial connections who wished in London to invert the social code of the colonies—there were English people who were ready to seek out the more stylish and approachable of the new arrivals. They met in Notting Hill, neutral territory, in dimly lit furnished flats in certain socially mixed squares; and they were gay and bright together. But few of the immigrants had proper jobs, or secure houses to go back to, and some of them were truly on the brink, and that gave an edge to the gaiety. ♦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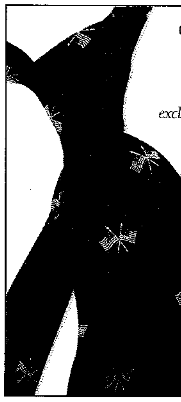
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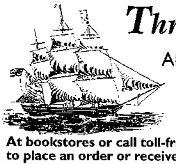
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THE CRITICS

BOOKS

BOYS WILL BE GIRLS

The making of Billy Wilder's "Some Like It Hot."

BY ANTHONY LANE

One morning in the summer of 1950, Billy Wilder was sitting alone, eating breakfast and reading the *Hollywood Reporter*. His wife, Audrey, came into the room and asked:

"Do you know what day this is, dear?"

"June 30th."

"It's our anniversary."

"Please," Wilder said, "not while I'm eating."

And there you have him. Like most Wilder anecdotes, this tale has been told many times, and we have gone beyond the point of being able to ascertain whether it might actually be true. I guess you could ask the man himself, who is still alive at the age of ninety-five, but that would be no help; when it comes to spinning webs of Wilder mythology, he is by far the worst and most enjoyable offender. (Who else, reliving his career as a cub reporter in Vienna, would claim to have interviewed Richard Strauss, Arthur Schnitzler, and Sigmund Freud on a single day?) Still, if the facts don't fit the legend, print the legend and to hell with it; what matters about the breakfast story is that it *sounds* right—the wisecrack zipping across the room and drowning the crunch of toast.

And so the rumors accrue, hardening the image of Wilder the cynic, Wilder the man-hater and woman-scorner. Who else would bother to assert that his bad back, which has plagued him throughout his career, was brought on by an urge to make love in Viennese doorways, standing up? More to the point, who else would say so in front of his wife? Wilder was one of those steely souls, forged in the Hollywood of the thirties and forties, who were even tougher than the actors they were slated to direct. In 1960, the year of "The Apartment," he looked back on the duties of his chosen profession: "A director must be a policeman, a midwife, a psychoanalyst, a sycophant, and a bastard." It's not affection that Wilder minds, I would imagine, but the fuss that is made of it—the anniversaries, the flowers, the song and dance. "Did you hear what I said, Miss Kubelik? I absolutely adore you," Jack Lemmon says, soft as a puppy, in the closing moments of "The Apartment." But Shirley MacLaine is having none of it: "Shut up and deal," she replies, addressing herself to the more pressing matter of gin rummy. She adores the guy, of course, and she has just run uptown to tell him so, but, still, there are limits. You have to keep the puppy on a leash.

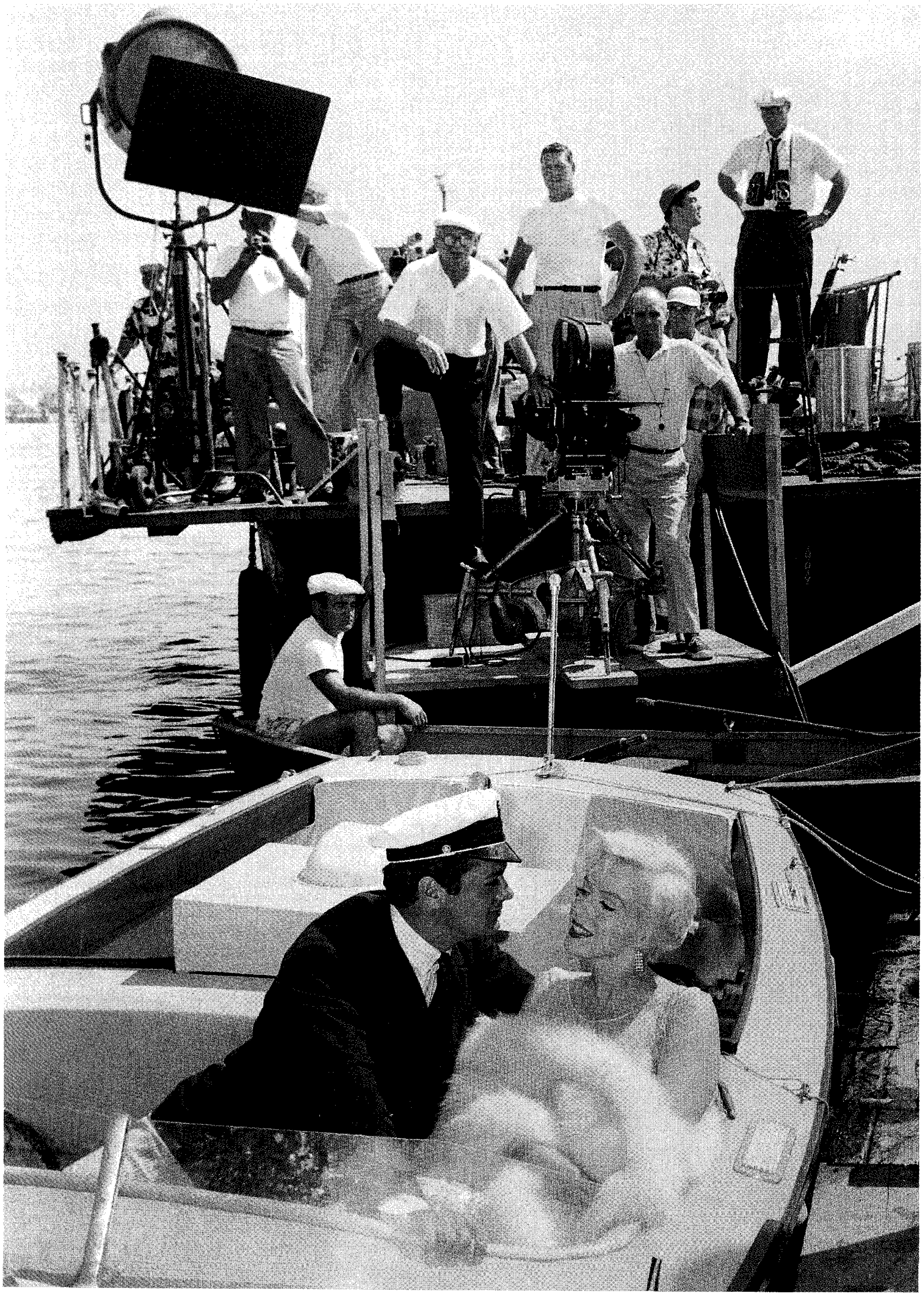
There is only one catch in the Wilder world—not even a catch, perhaps, but an irony that is strong enough to crack his cool. People love his movies. Needless to say, Wilder himself had an explanation for this, as he did for everything else. "You know how it is," he told reporters in London in 1961. "You hate your dentist while he's pulling your teeth out, but the next week you're playing golf with him." Over and over, Wilder shows us mankind behaving badly, or using one another as props and pawns, or racing into follies from which there is no escape, and still, like sheep to the shearer, we come back for more. "Double Indemnity," "The Seven Year Itch," "Sunset Boulevard," "The Apartment": these are part of the basic lexicon of moviegoing. One picture, in particular, has become an icon. Last year, the American Film Institute invited its members to vote on the hundred best comedies ever made. The top spot went to Billy Wilder's "Some Like It Hot" (1959).

Everyone knows that these hundred-best lists are a bore. Not a fix, exactly, although the film crowd, like all social groups who are presented with a questionnaire, tends to repeat the conventional wisdom without troubling to think it through. Still, it would take a brave critic to dispute the status of "Some Like It Hot," just as it would take a historian of the highest subtlety and resourcefulness to explain, before a tribunal of his peers, why the most entertaining cultural spectacle of the last hundred years has been, by common consent, a pair of full-grown American males wearing falsies.

Falsehood, it must be said, is the fuel of this famous movie. It is rabid with deception, and all attempts to summarize the plot tend to skip one of the changes of costume, or of heart; not until I saw the film again recently, perhaps for the tenth time, did I notice that Jack Lemmon turns briefly into a bellhop. The roughest of outlines would go as follows: A pair of small-time jazz musicians—Joe, a tenor-sax player (Tony Curtis), and Jerry, a bassist (Lemmon)—are accidental witnesses to the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. Pursued by a big-time gangster (George Raft) and his hoods, they dress as women and join an all-girl band on a train to Florida. There Joe, who has become Josephine, makes one more switch, pretending to be an oil baron in order to woo the band's singer, Sugar Cane (Marilyn Monroe), née Kowalczyk. And Jerry, who has become Daphne, draws the attention of the insatiable Osgood (Joe E. Brown), a bona-fide millionaire with a mouth like a mailbox. It all ends well, with both couples heading for a moonlit yacht.

What more is there to say? Many filmgoers can recite lines from this pic-

TOP: KOREN, 7/25/1983; OPPOSITE: MPTV



Wilder, to the left of the camera, directing Tony Curtis and Marilyn Monroe. He knew precisely how good a comedian she was.

ture more fluently than they can tell a story from their own past. The closing zinger—Daphne yanking off her wig and declaring herself to be a man, and Osgood replying, "Nobody's perfect," his beatific randiness intact—is the kind of thing that compilers of movie quotations slap on the covers of their books. Meanwhile, the traditional Wilder mischief has calcified into received opinion; when he said that Marilyn Monroe had breasts like granite and a brain like Swiss cheese, he must have realized that the line—one part idolatry to three parts slur—was here to stay, and it is true that Monroe's bosom, thrust in and out of the spotlight as she sings "I Wanna Be Loved by You" and "I'm Through with Love," has become as proud a feature of the American landscape as Mt. Rushmore. In fact, the whole film is a national treasure; you can look at it, but you can't touch.

Now a new angle has opened up. Just one warning: it'll cost you. A hundred and fifty dollars, to be precise, for which you get a book. "Billy Wilder's 'Some Like It Hot'" is the size of an old electric typewriter, and it weighs more than many common domestic animals. Spookier still, it is furrier than many common domestic animals, being covered in a lightly padded velvet the color of *crème pâtissière*. The title is picked out in orange leather lettering, as bold as a billboard, on the front cover; inside, you get colored production stills, dripping with Florida sunshine, plus full-page blowups of pencilled lines from the screenplay, and the effect is to seize an unsuspecting black-and-white comedy and propel it toward the status of Pop art. There are many books devoted to single films, but they tend to be unsmiling monographs, neatly nailing the work in question to the social history of its era; this book, by contrast, is more like one of Osgood's laughs—sinful, delirious, and loaded.

The publisher of this unusual volume is Taschen, which explains a lot. Benedikt Taschen is an outspoken German who started producing books in 1981, and who has since built up a catalogue so hip, so huge, and so hungry for taboo that you see people in Barnes & Noble make a beeline for the Taschen table and then sneak a glance around the store to make sure that nobody is looking. It goes without saying that you can't open a work entitled "1000 Dessous: A History of Lingerie" without being tapped on the shoulder by your fourth-grade teacher, whom you haven't seen in thirty years, and who once taught you the names of her favorite flowers. The thing about Taschen is that even the books that *are* about flowers bear a distinct fragrance of perversion; this fall sees the publication of "A Garden Eden: Masterpieces of Botanical Illustration," and a brief glance suggests that all those thrusting pistils should give the antique girdles and stockings a run for their money.

The Wilder book is split into three acts. The first section delves into the making of the movie and contains a facsimile of the final script, on aging buff paper, complete with holes punched at the edge. The second section is a sheaf of interviews with, among others, Wilder, Curtis, Lemmon, and Barbara Diamond, the widow of I. A. L. Diamond—Iz to his friends, and the co-writer on the movie. Diamond had no better friend than Wilder, nobody better qualified to match his smarts; as a team, they wrote a dozen films. ("Never a harsh word, twenty-five years of working together," Wilder once said, at a lecture. "We were like bank tellers.") They finished the screenplay of "Some Like It Hot" four days before the end of the shoot.) The interviews are new, conducted over the last couple of years. This doesn't mean that the material itself is new—all concerned have taken the opportunity to buff their anecdotes, like silver, over time—but it's useful to find it packaged together, and even Wilder scholars should rejoice to find Tony Curtis, especially, in such brazen form. You can hear the wide Brooklyn bark as he remembers, only too vividly, the professional drag queen whom Wilder flew in from Berlin to act as tutor to his leads:

> This guy told us to keep the cheeks of your ass tight. You tighten up—which you did if you were in the Navy anyway—and make one step good before the other. So when we started to put it together, it all became a very charming manner. I loved it . . . Jack was outrageous as a girl, he couldn't wait to go tromping out. I was more hesitant, I was more like Grace Kelly than like my mother. I was on track.

What's sweet about these recollections is that Curtis plainly took a genuine pride in his womanly appearance; even now, the wording ("a very charming manner") retains a feminine correctness that borders on the prim. Or at least it does until he gets to Marilyn's door, and to the little tailor who was busy with his tape measure, checking the statistics of the stars:

> Anyway, he measured me, 16, 34, 43, 18, 19, 18 . . . and then he goes to Marilyn, this is all in the same day and this is the truth . . . He comes in to Marilyn's room and Marilyn had on a pair of panties and a white blouse and that's all. He put the tape around her legs, looked up at Marilyn and said, "You know, Tony Curtis has got a better-looking ass than you." She was standing there, she unbuttoned her blouse and said, "He doesn't have tits like these."

For once, I think we need these salty stories, because Monroe needs all the salt she can get. The Marilyn industry is so deeply soaked in her crackups—shaking the poor woman until we can hear the slosh of booze and the rattle of pills—that it's sobering to get back to the floozie with the forked tongue. If "Some Like It Hot" remains her best as well as her most celebrated film, that is because Wilder was lucky enough, and perceptive enough, to catch Marilyn when her balance was still intact. Wilder knew precisely how good a comedian she was, he knew the ratio of bite to fluff, and he saw that her pathos—which the public, avid for the crash of failing marriages, was increasingly keen to ascribe to her—wasn't worth a damn unless it came wrapped in shining lines. "That's the story of my life: I always get the fuzzy end of the lollipop" is dangerously close to one of Marilyn's private confessions, but Wilder and Diamond give the image such a lick and a twist that it slots quite happily into the given scene—Sugar Cane chatting to the new girls on the train heading south, and taking a slug from the flask of bourbon that she keeps tucked into her garter. Shortly afterward, she jumps into bed with Jack Lemmon, just for comfort. Both are in nightgowns:

> SUGAR: When I was a little girl, on cold nights like this, I used to crawl into bed with my sister. We'd cuddle up under the covers, and pretend we were lost in a dark cave, and were trying to find our way out.
>
> JERRY: (mopping his brow) Interesting.

It's only when you read this in the Taschen book, as part of the printed screenplay, that you realize how fantastically dirty it is. (Dirtier, indeed, than it plays onscreen, where Lemmon adds a "very" and froths the line up with a giggle.) Somehow, under the camouflage of a joke, Wilder got that dark-cave stuff past the censors; if challenged, presumably, he could always claim to be unwise in the ways of symbolism. A lollipop was just a thing you sucked.

Taschen saves the best for last. The third section is a roundup of the global reaction to the movie, including a Mexican poster for "Una Eva y Dos Adanes" and a newspaper clipping announcing that, whatever some might like, it was too damn hot for the state of Kansas. (The authorities wanted to cut the smooch on the yacht between Curtis and Monroe, in which he feigns impotence and invites her to cure it, but United Artists said no.) Finally, tucked into the inside of the back cover is a scrappy-looking notebook: an exact reproduction of Marilyn's own shooting script. It is not very long—it contains only her lines, with the ends of the lines that precede them, so as not to confound her—and scrawled here and there are her frazzled, misspelled comments and jabs of self-persuasion: "*what* am I doing," "inocent," "Acting being private in public to be Brave." On the front, she put her name and address—"MARiLYN MONROE, GoLdWyN Studios, N. FORMOSA," in case the book got lost. Or, more likely, in case *she* got lost. Once, when filming "The Seven Year Itch," she arrived at eleven o'clock for an eight-thirty start; when Wilder wanted to know what had happened, she replied that she couldn't find the studio. "She'd only been under contract for six years," Wilder said later, with one of his dry grins. A particular line reading for "Some Like It Hot" required eighty-three takes, at the end of which he told Marilyn not to worry. "Worry about what?" she asked.

FLORIDA
ARUBA
B. Smaller

"We want to do the whole Jack Kerouac-'On the Road' thing, only with B. & B.s."

• •

That sublime question hovers in the air, whenever "Some Like It Hot" is showing, as blithely as a bird. It's as if Wilder were daring us to give him a list of things—the dreadful evidence of the world—that are worthy of significant worry, and then swatting them aside. Remember, this is a film that looks on as a line of thugs commit multiple murder in a Chicago garage; Wilder shows only the thugs, however, not the jerking bodies, and thus gives us leave to laugh. The picture begins in death, with a respectful shot of a hearse, and ends in a double helping of love. Ed Sikov, in his clever, compendious biography of Wilder, quotes the director in one of his milder moods: "Movies should be like amusement parks. People should go to them to have fun."

The fun in Billy Wilder feels like an attack; sleeping around the office was never quite the same after "The Apartment," which—contrary to the charges of misogyny that have been laid at Wilder's door—passes much harder sentence on the guys than on the dolls. Yet, the more you learn of Wilder, the more you wonder whether his dialogue, as black and gleaming as wet ink, might not have been his first line of defense. Like half the great American directors, he was the pure product of Europe. Humphrey Bogart, who didn't take to Wilder on the set of "Sabrina," labelled him a "Prussian German." Even by Bogie's standards, this was wide of the mark, since Wilder was born a Polish Jew. He lived in Krakow, Vienna, and Berlin, where he made his name writing screenplays. In 1933, when Hitler came to power, Wilder moved to Paris: "It seemed the wise thing for a Jew to do." Less than a year later, as if the needle of his talent were seeking magnetic north, he came to America, bearing, according to Ed Sikov, copies of "Babbitt," "A Farewell to Arms," and "Look Homeward, Angel," and the sum of eleven dollars.

In 1945, he returned to Europe, in the uniform of a colonel; he was working for the Psychological Warfare Division, and one of his duties was to view and cut the footage that was coming in from the concentration camps. This was then shown to German audiences. He also had to screen performers for the revival of cultural events, a task that came to a head when Anton Lang, who had played the part of Christ in the Passion Play at Oberammergau before the war, and who had since joined the S.S., requested permission to take up the role once more. On one condition, Wilder said: "Use real nails." It may be disconcerting to find one-liners flourishing, even at their bitterest, in such ruined soil, but it is equally presumptuous to push the matter further; as far as Billy Wilder knows, his mother, stepfather, and grandmother died at Auschwitz, and nobody can tell such a man how he should or should not respond. If his first film after the war, a Tyrolian fantasy called "The Emperor Waltz," starring Bing Crosby in lederhosen, seems almost pathological in its urge to ignore suffering, so be it. With time, it seems that Wilder has returned to the scene of those crimes: he tried to buy the rights to the Thomas Keneally novel "Schindler's List," and there was even talk of his emerging from retirement to direct. When Spielberg's film was released, Wilder approved, and he used the occasion to write an article for a German newspaper, posing a quiet, unanswerable question to those who were tempted to doubt the existence of the Holocaust: "If the concentration camps and the gas chambers were all imaginary, then please tell me—where is my mother?"

For fans of his work, it is legitimate to ask whether Wilder's restive habits—the migrations of an orphaned cosmopolitan—somehow find their way into the movies. The heroes and heroines in his films may not go in for many changes of scenery, but is there not something obsessive in the ease, or the eagerness, with which they shift the landscape of their own lives, as if preparing at any instant to flee? First up is Ginger Rogers, who adopts the not altogether credible disguise of a twelve-year-old girl in "The Major and the Minor" (1942), Wilder's first film as an American director. Then we have Franchot Tone in "Five Graves to Cairo" (1943), pretending to be a waiter and being mistaken for a spy; Audrey Hepburn in "Love in the Afternoon" (1957), the ingénue who poses as a fur-lined sophisticate in the hope of snaring Gary Cooper; virtually the entire cast of "The Apartment" (1960), followed by Jack Lemmon again, in "Irma La Douce" (1963), playing a lowly French cop who passes himself off as an English lord. Finally, and most acridly, there is Kim Novak in "Kiss Me, Stupid" (1964), the hooker who becomes a temporary wife.

Wilder is not the first person to connect comedy with a taste for subterfuge, as anyone familiar with "Twelfth Night" can confirm. And Shakespeare has nothing to brag about, either, given that he lifted half the plot of "The Comedy of Errors" from a play by Plautus written in around 200 B.C. All we can say is that, if Wilder had a vested interest in shape-shifting, "Some Like It Hot" brings that interest to the boil. Joe and Jerry are not so much characters as quick-change artists with good musical technique, and the fluidity of their self-invention, like their sense of rhythm, confronts our feelings of dullness and stolidity and merrily blows them away. When they first decide to dress as women, the camera honors the outrageousness of the plan: no kooky shots of waxing and padding, no closeups of wig tape and tweezers, just a straight, no-bullshit cut to the railroad station and a hearty couple of broads. Wilder has always scorned what he calls the "fancy-schmancy," and "Some Like It Hot" takes a convoluted problem and lays it on us straight.

That is why all efforts to tease a deeper entanglement from Wilder's manic film are fated to fail. I looked up "Some Like It Hot" in a chunky, five-volume work entitled "International Dictionary of Films and Film-Makers," and came across these words:

> When Joe tries to assert his masculinity with Sugar, Jerry insists he maintain his female identity. Aware of their dilemma, our pleasure becomes dependent on the ramifications of gender identification and sexual exposure.

As Osgood would say, "Zowie!" In fact, "Some Like It Hot" has almost nothing to tell us about transvestism, and surprisingly few suggestions on the topic of homosexuality. It really is about two men who put on women's clothes to save their skins, and it was part of Wilder's genius that he encouraged his leading men to push their faux girlishness in opposite directions—Curtis toward the demure, Lemmon head first into the lubricious and the loud. That way, we get no single statement on the pathology of cross-dressing, and we soon realize that we don't need one. Remember their heated exchange after Jerry gets engaged to Osgood:

> JOE: Why would a guy want to marry a guy?
> JERRY: *Security.*

Lemmon really whacks that second syllable, and backs it up with a sharp shiver of his maracas. (Wilder devised them as a prop; he needed something for Lemmon to be doing while the audience laughed, so that Curtis's next straight line would not get buried. Get that for confidence.) Jerry isn't lying, but he's not gay, either; strangely, "Some Like It Hot" only becomes truly fraught with sexual confusion if you try to decide what will happen after the end of the picture. Imagine all four of them chasing each other around the fo'c'sle.

So where does that leave Osgood's final, contented dictum: "Nobody's perfect"? As a universal truth, a withering Wilder glance at life beyond the movie theatre, it remains unimpeachable. As a wrap-up for "Some Like It Hot," however, it's less of a sure thing. Inside this picture, everybody *is* perfect. It goes without saying that nobody is good or morally deserving, unless you count the crumbling Sugar, yet all the dizzy men and women on display are allowed to fulfill the essential duties of their nature, to act as we would want them to act, and more than that we surely cannot ask. Wilder has often been disdained by critics for his misanthropy, a complaint that strikes me as absurd; if we were to start striking artists off the list because of the attitudes they happen to hold toward humanity, we would be left with very few. For one thing, there would be piles of Flaubert burning in the street. More pertinent is the question of what Wilder does with this narrow-eyed suspicion of his fellow-men, and the most vigorous reply is made by "Some Like It Hot." The movie holds itself between a sober recognition that none of us can be trusted and the more spirited, even stirring sight of lovers straining every sinew to break the cycle of disenchantment and keep their ridiculous promises. If that sounds tricky, you try straining a sinew in heels.

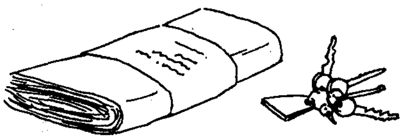
All of which means that "Some Like It Hot" is an object of beauty. Comedies, under Hollywood law, are not supposed to be beautiful, but Wilder's film, like "Sunset Boulevard" and "The Apartment," finds a balance between hope and despair, and that in turn translates into a Viennese play of shadow and gleam. ("I hate color," Wilder said, adding, "Even words sound phony when the picture is in color.") When the upright citizens of Kansas tried to ban "Some Like It Hot" because of the scene on the yacht, they didn't know what they were missing: not merely Monroe's astounding backless dress but the enticing glitter when she turns off the lamp—a thousand points of light, reflecting off the dress and the shelf of sporting trophies at the side. She is a trophy, too, but the gorgeousness of the scene makes her momentarily more precious than even Joe, with his fogged spectacles, could possibly know. Likewise, when Sugar thinks she has lost her millionaire, she takes her sadness out on a song, "I'm Through with Love," and Wilder lets her long vibrato—"For I must have *you-oo-oo* or no one"—ring and ripple around the movie, as if it could halt the merry-go-round of constant pursuit, and as if her yearning were more than a silly crush. The happy endings of "Some Like It Hot" and "The Apartment" are not tacked on as an afterthought or a sop; they inform us that good fortune, including the luck of requited love, cannot be relied upon to arrive like a train. It can only be grabbed in passing, at the last gasp.

Billy Wilder knows what happiness is; he once defined it as having a doctor who smokes four packs a day. When the profits of "Some Like It Hot" came in, he himself was handed $1.2 million, which in 1960 was a lot of dough. He bought himself two Paul Klees, an Egon Schiele, and a couple of Braques, to go with his Balthus and his Matisse: happiness you can stare at. Almost three decades later, he was asked, in all seriousness, whether he would have made movies if he hadn't been paid to do so. And Wilder, the man who has told more cold truths than many of us would care to hear, didn't hesitate for a second: "What do you think, I'm a sucker?" ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

In the Name of Identity, *by Amin Maalouf, translated from the French by Barbara Bray (Arcade; $22.95).* This meditation on identity asks why the Arab world increasingly looks like a stronghold of fanaticism. The author, a Lebanese-born Christian who is now a resident of France, points out that Islam is not, historically, any more violent than Christianity, and looks at the forces currently acting upon it. While noting the Middle East's poverty and instability, he also suggests that after the fall of the Soviet Union those who might once have turned to Communism as an agency of political change now turn to fanaticism, and its promise of salvation through action. Maalouf, a novelist, doesn't support his generalized argument with scholarly detail, but this is nevertheless an eloquent introductory exploration of why, in this age of globalization, we need to abandon our historical idea of identity as a single religious or national alliance.

Richard Wright: The Life and Times, *by Hazel Rowley (Holt; $35).* With the publication of "Native Son" in 1940, Richard Wright (1908-60) became the first African-American to write a best-selling novel and inspired a new generation of black novelists. As this absorbing biography documents, however, Wright remained an outsider everywhere. He was born in Mississippi, to a life of deprivation and humiliation, and when he fled to Chicago, in 1927, with dreams of becoming a writer, the only unsegregated institution that welcomed him was the John Reed Club, an affiliate of the Communist Party. While no one doubted his literary gifts, his insistence on truthtelling created problems for him both as a Communist and as an ex-Communist. When he left the Party and subsequently moved to Paris, in 1946, he irritated the American government by describing American racism to Europeans, and faced criticism from black readers for his unflattering portrayals of black characters. In the last months of his life, he wrote thousands of haiku that reflected his lonely, despairing, and paranoid frame of mind: "I am nobody: / A red sinking autumn sun / Took my name away."



Mona and Other Tales, *by Reinaldo Arenas, translated from the Spanish by Dolores M. Koch (Vintage; $12).* Arenas has an Orwellian flare for charged, unflinching political satire, but it is his range that impresses in this posthumous collection. Boys and their escapes are among his most compelling subjects: boys who stargaze at constellations of their own invention, walk with their eyes closed to blot out the cruelty of their companions, or join revolutions they do not faintly comprehend. Arenas also delights in taking comic liberties with past masterpieces. In "Halley's Comet," the characters from García Lorca's "House of Bernarda Alba" pack up and move to provincial Cuba. And in "Mona," which cloaks itself in layers of ersatz textual commentary, a Cuban exile in New York falls into the clutches of a femme fatale who bears a striking resemblance to a familiar Italian Renaissance portrait. The lust and violence that pervade the author's memoir, "Before Night Falls," are also present here, but the fierce humor and quiet ache of these tales offer a memorable counterpoint.

London Bridges, *by Jane Stevenson (Houghton Mifflin; $24).* In this début novel, Edward Lupset, a callow and grasping London lawyer who glimpses a chance at ill-gotten gains inside an old deed box, is cleverly set up to get his comeuppance. Edward's dreams of loot center on the former site of St. Michael Graecorum, the title of which is held by monks on Mt. Athos, but the true treasure here is Stevenson's motley chorus of characters—Sebastian, a Wildean classicist; Hattie, a London activist in love with the Thames and its landmarks; Dilip, who grows zucchini on his balcony; and a dog called Alice—who unite to thwart evil and redeem the old-fashioned ideas of propriety and intrinsic value.

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THE ART WORLD

THE SURGEON

Philadelphia celebrates its most prodigious native son.

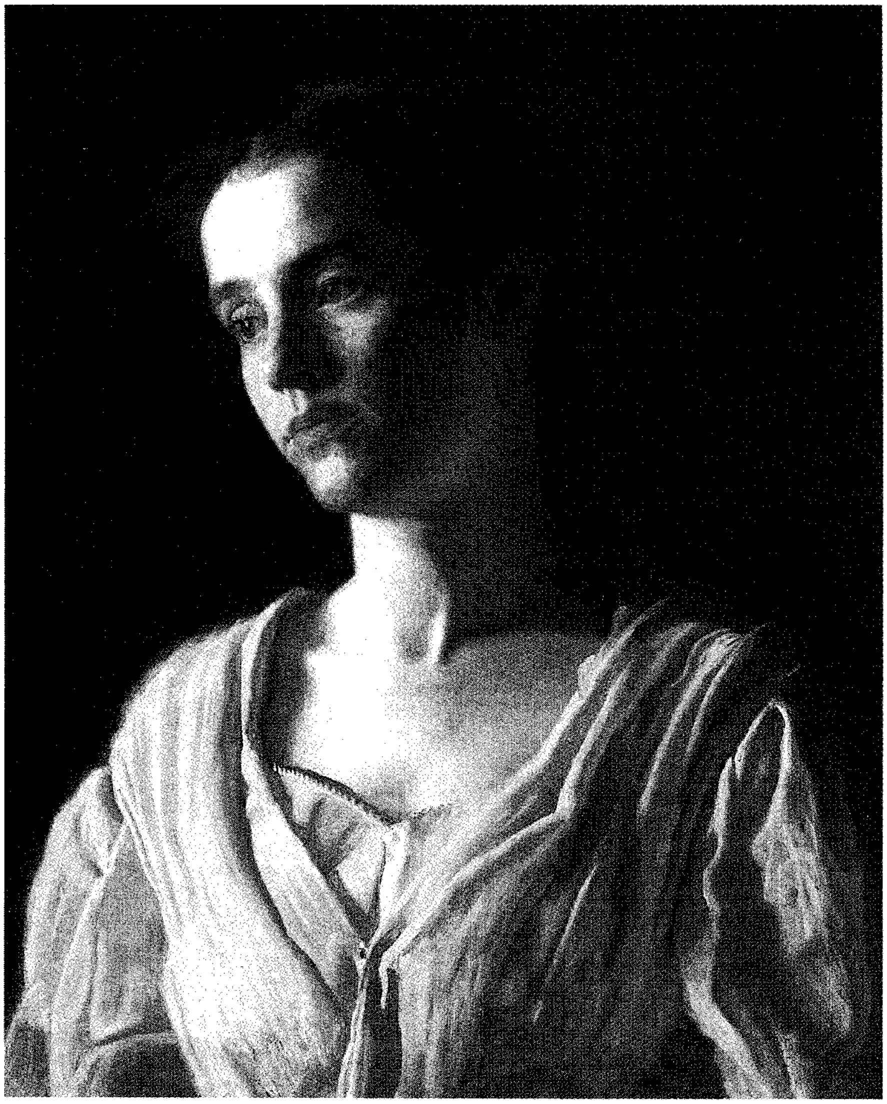
BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

Thomas Eakins, who was perhaps the greatest American artist before Abstract Expressionism, was American by the usual test: he couldn't have been anything else. The same might be said of his art, which is styleless. There is no Eakins look. There is only a distinctive pitch of ambition and excellence. A magnificent retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, organized by the curator Darrel Sewell, endorses the opinion of the artist's older friend and hero Walt Whitman: "Eakins is not a painter, he is a force." Cannily intermingled paintings, photographs, drawings, sculptures, and miscellaneous artifacts—such as grisly casts taken from parts of dissected cadavers—reveal the artist as a yeoman genius, strenuous in all things. Eakins made aesthetics sweat. It is astonishing how contemporary he feels today.

Like Whitman, Eakins was a prophet of American inventiveness and self-invention, fired with an almost scary sincerity. In a letter from Paris, composed in 1868 when he was twenty-three and mastering the skills of French academic painting, he wrote, "I love sunlight & children & beautiful women & men their heads & hands & most everything I see & someday I expect to paint them as I see them and even paint some that I remember or imagine make up from old memories of love & light & warmth." The operative word turned out to be "someday." Unlike Whitman, Eakins would never luxuriate in the world. But he never ceased preparing to do so. As a teacher at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, he enlisted science, mathematics, photography, and technical ingenuity in a grand pedagogical program that aimed to put art on a solid footing with life in the present tense. His paintings can seem not so much culminations as by-products of this prodigious effort. Even his portraits, which include some of the finest ever painted, have an air of demonstration about them. His big multi-figure compositions of rowing races, operating theatres, and men and boys at play remain visions of possibility, visual essays about what a world-class American painting might be.

Eakins was born in Philadelphia in 1844 and, except for four years of study in France and Spain, lived in that city until his death, in 1916. The fact that his father was a teacher of calligraphy helps to account for Eakins's punctiliousness in all matters of technique. The young artist took to academic training with a zeal that proved remarkably immune to the sentimental longueurs of his beloved teacher in Paris, Jean-Léon Gérôme. If he ignored Courbet and Manet and, later, the Impressionists, it may have been because he felt "modern" in his bones and saw no need to sacrifice the intricate powers of conventional know-how. He chafed only at drills in drawing from plaster casts and at other postponements of working with paint. Like Manet, he was inspired by the Spanish Baroque (Velázquez, especially) and its way of painting outward to the contour of a form rather than filling in a linear outline. His interest was concentrated on central figures; his backgrounds are perfunctory. Eakins's element was life class. The studio nude obsessed him both in principle—as the touchstone of artistic competence—and personally. His devotion to coed life classes got him fired by the Pennsylvania Academy in 1886. One senses why from many of the show's engrossing photographs, taken by Eakins and his circle, in which getting naked seems the folkway of an aggressively earnest bohemia. Pansexual heat glowed in dim rooms that smelled of dust and varnish.

This may not be a minor point, though the show's otherwise marvellously detailed catalogue essays are quaintly reticent about Eakins's sexuality. There are a few telling anecdotes. One concerns Maud Cook, the lovely young model for “The Concert Singer” (1890-92), a brilliant painting so true to life that some scholars assert, from the look of the singer’s mouth and throat, that she had to have been uttering the “e” sound in “rest.” (We know that the song was Mendelssohn’s “O rest in the Lord,” which Cook often sang for Walt Whitman, at the poet’s request.) Eakins later alienated her by insisting that she pose nude for him. The art historian Marc Simpson quotes Cook as saying that he “‘kept after her’ . . . making his eyes ‘soft and appealing’ and dropping into a Quaker ‘thee’—‘gentleness combined with the persistence of a devil.’ ” Three years later, having forgiven him, she sat for one of his supreme female portraits, wearing a demure pink dress. Before I knew the story, I had decided that “Portrait of Maud Cook” was one of the most erotically charged pictures I had ever seen. My point is not that Eakins may have been a wolf—who cares?—but that animal instinct and professional commitment were tightly knotted for him in a manner that seems to me deeply Puritan. Call it heroic hypocrisy—an attitude, long popularly associated with medical practice, that exalts certain vocations to shield them from moral taint.



Eakins’s “Portrait of Maud Cook” (1895) conveys eroticism with fastidious rigor.

YALE UNIV. ART GALLERY/COURTESY YALE UNIV. PRESS

Eakins’s portraits are tense standoffs between intimacy and integrity, conveying his avidity for the sitters while making no secret of the anxieties that attended the painting of them. More than one observer has remarked—inviting comparisons with Rembrandt—that we can see Eakins’s people thinking. To judge from their expressions, these thoughts are not joyous. Only two figures of the many that the artist brought to breathing life strike me as expansively happy. They are the eponymous surgeons in “The Gross Clinic” and “The Agnew Clinic,” standing back from their bloody handiwork with their scalpels. Eakins renders them as demigods incandescent with pride and the world’s applause. They are plainly surrogates of the artist as, brush still in hand, he regards a painting well done.

Isn’t the poetry of consummate and fearless work what we love in Eakins? Many critics have tried to define his astringent glory. Clement Greenberg observed acutely, “The visionary overtones of his art move us all the more because they echo *facts*. This is perhaps the most American note of all.” Greenberg described Eakins’s manner as “a neutral, natural style not so much because it was shared with others as because of the honesty and appropriateness with which he used it, without flourishes, without ‘retouching,’ without either elegance or inelegance.” Even his lesser works communicate a hard-won victory over the human frailties that cloud normal seeing. Ambiguously, those weaknesses include the very “adhesiveness” (in Whitman’s great word) that drew the artist to his subjects. Whatever else Eakins had in mind when he begged Maud Cook to strip, he knew that she would make a good picture. For him, the dignity of art may have stood in an inverse relation to the nobility of its motive. His best subjects are the rawest or the humblest. His single truly bad painting is a Crucifixion.

In 1875, Gérôme arranged for a number of works by his former pupil—among them, the dazzling sailboat painting “Starting Out After Rail”—to be shown in the Paris Salon of that year. A witty French critic noted the pictures’ photographic qualities and wondered “whether these are not specimens of a still secret industrial process, and that the inventor may have maliciously sent them to Paris to . . . frighten the *école française*.” This tiny shock was an early warning that American painting was destined to operate according to its own rules, with spontaneous, intimidating power. Already Eakins could push the logic of French academic art to modern extremes, because for him, as an American, it was only logic, unchecked by French sophistication. To Whitman’s “barbaric yawp,” he added a barbaric precision as stark and challenging as skyscrapers against the sky. ♦

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NORDIC TRACTS

Strindberg and Ibsen on love and death.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

It's Bad Marriage Month on Broadway, what with revivals of Strindberg's "Dance of Death," at the Broadhurst, and Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler," at the Ambassador. The plays, both of them newly adapted by celebrated playwrights of our own time, stake out different corners of the blasted heath of matrimony: the Ibsen (written in 1890 and adapted by Jon Robin Baitz) begins just after a couple's unpromising honeymoon, while the Strindberg (1900, adapted by Richard Greenberg) is set on the eve of a couple's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. In "Dance of Death," Edgar and Alice (Ian McKellen and Helen Mirren)—a mili-

Ian McKellen and Helen Mirren kick up some domestic dust as Edgar and Alice tary captain and a former actress—go at each other relentlessly, each knowing how to inflict wounds with precision and economy, and how to keep them open. (They may remind you of a more contemporary fun couple: George and Martha, of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?") Their attacks are so predictable and so regular that you laugh as often as you wince. As in the old gag wherein a guy calls out familiar jokes by number instead of going to the trouble of telling them, Alice, when she wants to get in a dig at Edgar over, say, a book he wrote on rifles that has been surpassed by someone else's work, could simply call out, "No. 8!" Edgar can't even play a card game without turning it into an occasion for combat: when he pulls out a notebook to enter the score, we can see on the pages the tallies of many past engagements.

All Edgar and Alice have is each other, living alone, as they do, in a tower—a former prison—on an island outpost off the coast of Sweden, and isolated from the other inhabitants, whom Edgar calls "bottom-feeders." (The tower, a huge curved brick structure designed by Santo Loquasto, thrusts into the stage from one of the wings like the prow of a ship, or a leaning Flatiron Building, letting in only the tiniest cracks of light from the outside world.) They have sent their two children away to school, partly to protect them from collateral emotional damage, but also because the children would no

rindberg's "Dance of Death." Photographs by Brigitte Lacombe.

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doubt be an irritating distraction from Alice and Edgar's all-consuming passion for tearing each other down. Like ham actors, they are soaked in the theatricality of their own predicament: when Mirren says that in the tower her children grew to have an "ashen inmate look," her tone takes on a melodramatic detachment, as if Alice were congratulating herself on her delivery of this vivid line. McKellen, revelling in the easy, vernacular phrasing of Greenberg's adaptation, is crisply, sardonically flamboyant. When a guest refuses a drink, and Edgar says, disapprovingly, "I want excess, or what's the point?" the audience rustles appreciatively, as if McKellen, in passing along Edgar's philosophy of life, had also described in a nutshell the essence of his own performance. Alice acts almost as his straight man, feeding him lines that are bound to set him off. When she objects to Edgar's yawning in response to one of her remarks, he says that he yawned as a "change of pace" from giving the same response he's given hundreds of times before. "So my yawn could be interpreted to mean: 'I can't be bothered,' or 'How right you are, my sweetums,' or 'Why not just shut up, hm?' " Alice, clearly enjoying this, says, not entirely without basis, "You are really too charming this evening." He is the windbag beneath her wings.

Onto this battlefield wanders Alice's cousin Kurt (David Strathairn), who has come to the island as a quarantine officer. It's an ambiguous role—Kurt either helped make the match between Edgar and Alice or tried to prevent it, depending on whom you believe—and largely a passive, reactive one, as he gets sucked into the marital maelstrom. But Strathairn has been given too much rope by the director, Sean Mathias; he takes his character's recessiveness too far (as Strathairn often does, as if being one of the handsomest men alive made him want to hide), and the only moment when his dozy performance seems properly keyed to the role is in a scene in which Kurt has just woken up.

Alice and Edgar chew Kurt up and spit him out, and it is in their betrayal of him that we see their true brutality and, at the same time, their true tenderness toward each other. By the end of the play, Alice and Edgar are facing truths that go beyond the particular facts of their marriage to the elemental facts of existence. Edgar, having had a glimpse of his own mortality, speaks of losing his "talent to turn life into fiction." McKellen and Mirren magnificently turn Strindberg's fiction into life, and McKellen, in his deep embrace of the role, takes it one step further, showing performance itself to be a powerful life force. As a presence onstage, he is the sound of two hands clapping.

The production of "Hedda Gabler" at the Ambassador, which stars Kate Burton, left me so completely unmoved that, given how powerfully it has moved others in its various incarnations in the last year and a half—at Long Island's Bay Street Theatre (whose co-artistic director is Burton's mother, Sybil Christopher), at the Williamstown Theatre Festival (whose producer is Burton's husband, Michael Ritchie), and at the Huntington Theatre Company, in Boston—I am inclined to blame myself for not knowing greatness when I see it. But right after I do that—*there;* consider it done—I will distribute packets of blame of varying sizes to the moment we happen to be living in; to Baitz's textureless adaptation of the play, which leaves little room for shading or depth; and to Nicholas Martin's confused, heavy-handed direction. Although a classic is by definition timeless, right now it is hard to become interested in a character whose self-professed life goal is no broader than "to have some power over someone's destiny," and whose definition of happiness has to do only with the untrammelled expression of her own will. She's bored, that's Hedda's problem. (Which is not to say that we need to feel sympathetic to Hedda in order to appreciate the play; Ibsen wasn't looking for our sympathy.) In an interview in the *Times*, Burton said that she had asked Baitz for clues about playing Hedda, and he said, "She's the funniest and the smartest person in the room." Perhaps she is, but highlighting Hedda's surface brightness and 'tude, as Burton does, makes the play feel dated and her fate inexplicable—it seems self-determined and unconnected to social forces. Baitz's colloquial language only heightens the sense of anachronism: one character says of another that he has "zero aptitude for politics." In a program note, Baitz writes that he tried "to build a clean and, in many respects, invisible bridge to Ibsen's play," but in the process of modernization he burned the bridge that connects the play to history. ♦

MUSICAL EVENTS

BEETHOVEN UNBOUND

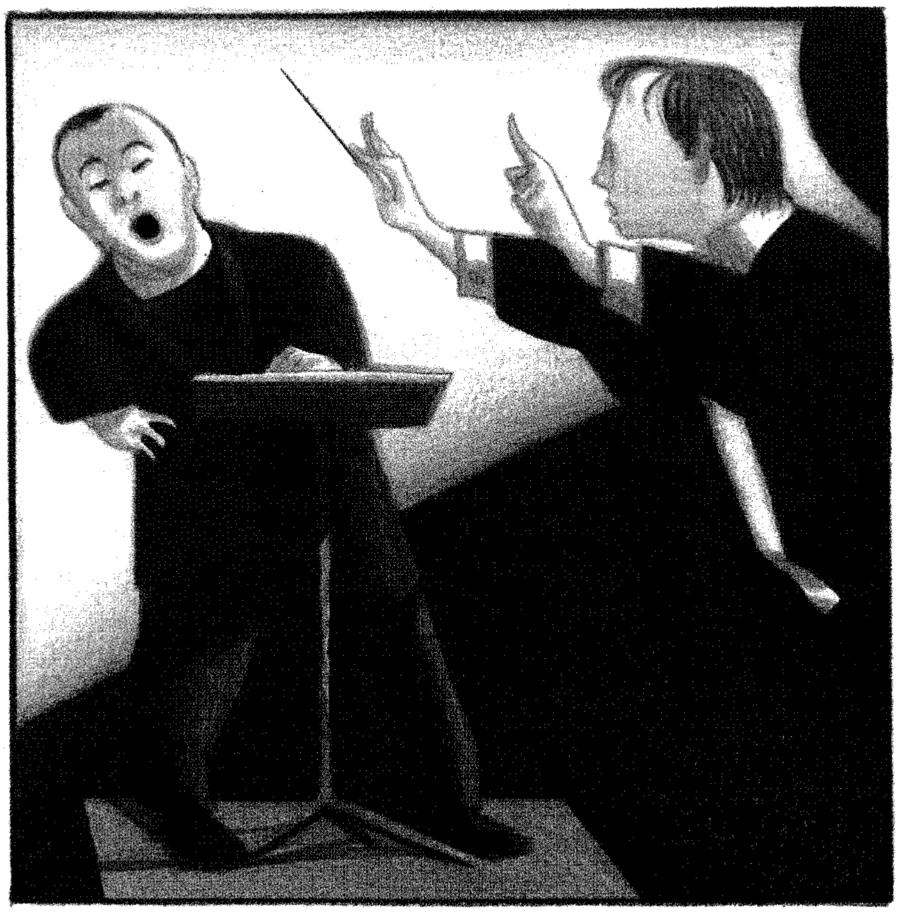
The Berlin Philharmonic shakes the rafters.

BY ALEX ROSS

At Carnegie Hall the other night, a middle-aged concertgoer in a gray suit stood up and bowed toward the stage three times, his arms stretched out in front of him. The object of his homage was the Berlin Philharmonic, which had just finished playing Beethoven's Seventh. Perhaps someone was able to explain to the musicians that the gesture was not a religious reference but what Americans call a "We're not worthy" bow. As strange as it was to see this Yankee Stadium display in Carnegie, the Berliners were so staggeringly good that it seemed a sensible response.

Even Beethoven in his deafness would have perceived that something extraordinary was happening. You could *see* how fine the playing was. One test of an orchestra is to watch the first and second violins: in lesser ensembles, and even in some better ones, you will notice a certain amount of committed activity in the front desks and a lot of halfhearted sawing elsewhere in the section. The Berlin backbenchers play with the fury of celebrity soloists. During contrapuntal passages, as figures are traded from one section to another, the entire ensemble sways this way and that, like an orchard in a storm. The orchestra is an organism that is sensitive to the slightest irregularity: whenever a violinist in the back has a problem with a string, a wave of anxiety passes over his neighbors, and is relieved only when the overwrought rookie has tuned up and resumed.

The Berliners are famous for their darkly glowing timbre—the musical equivalent of a Rembrandt interior. The deep-voiced instruments may not play any louder than those in other orchestras, but they are emphatically more cohesive and in tune. In place of the usual vague rumbling of double basses, for example, you hear clean, booming tones. When the Berliner basses take up the corkscrew figure that drives the finale of the Seventh Symphony, it is as if a Russian men's choir were singing underneath the floor. Basses, timpani, trombones, and bassoons produce a precisely calibrated thrum, which, by some acoustic trick, seems to be coming from all around and even inside you. In the grip of this illusion, you understand how the orchestra became a political animal in nineteenth-century Europe, and how Beethoven became a new kind of artist hero. Primal switches are tripped, and men in suits are moved to do strange things.

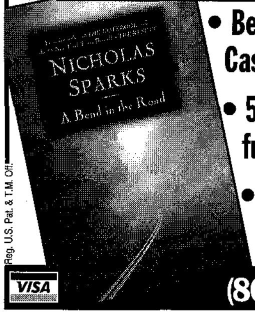


Thomas Quasthoff, conducted by Abbado, sang with thrilling directness.

LORENZO MATTOTTI

The Berliners, in their three-concert series at Carnegie Hall, matched the emotions of the hour by emphasizing Beethoven in his heroic mode: the Third, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Symphonies, together with the "Egmont" Overture. It was reassuring to hear these intensely familiar works again. They were landscapes that had remained unchanged, yet they were lit up with fresh intelligence and passion. Just as Beethoven himself never tired of reworking his material, the Berliners have the ability to fall in love again with music they have performed a hundred times. For this reason, they play Beethoven better than anyone.

Since its founding, in 1882, the Berlin Philharmonic has been led by five men, each of them carved into the memory of the city. First came Hans von Bülow, the ambidextrous apostle of Brahms and Wagner, who used to make caustic, cryptic speeches from the podium, on one occasion expounding the anarchist philosophy of Max Stirner. Then there was Arthur Nikisch, a hypnotically elegant stylist who won the admiration of Toscanini. (After conducting at La Scala, Nikisch commented on the quality of the orchestra, and Toscanini said to him, "It is a bad orchestra. You are a good conductor.")



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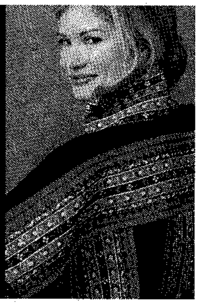

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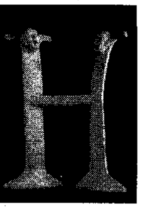

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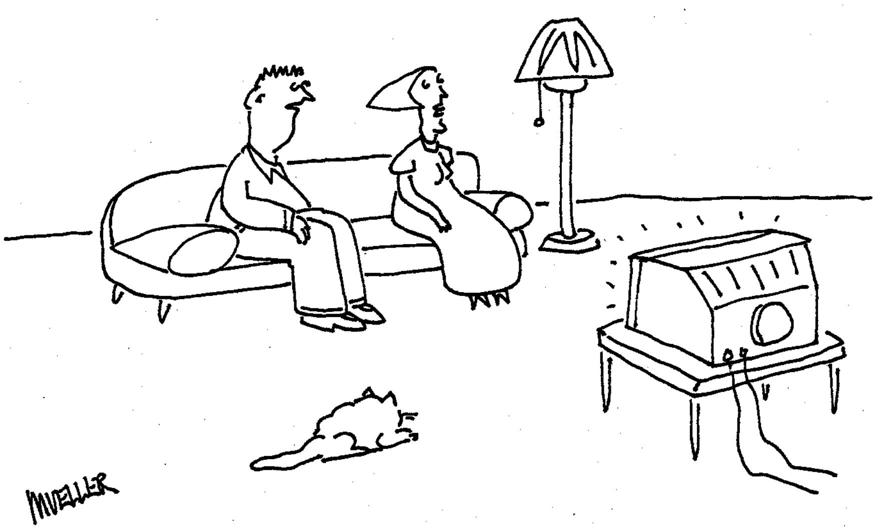

"Look, honey! Important people talking loudly!"

• •

Wilhelm Furtwängler, the maestro of the Hitler era, reached the zenith of his art just as Germany was sinking to its nadir. Herbert von Karajan brought to bear a creepy cult of personality and an exalted understanding of orchestral sound.

Claudio Abbado, who succeeded Karajan in 1989, and is now entering his final season with the orchestra, may seem a little mild in comparison with those sacred monsters. In a way, he has already been overshadowed by his successor, Simon Rattle, who forced a restructuring of the orchestra's finances even before he signed his contract. Abbado is a peculiarly humble leader who has failed to cultivate a Karajanesque mystique in the press. He has issued a sizable number of recordings, but few of these have had the impact of Furtwängler's. Still, Abbado's performances have a special aura, and they have deepened with the years. He is probably too pure a spirit to admit that his recent battle with stomach cancer has changed his musicianship, but the Carnegie concerts showed a new urgency and simplicity, as if he knows what counts.

Consider his interpretation of the "Eroica," a work that should by now have yielded all its secrets. Scholars never tire of writing about the C sharp that crops up in the opening E-flat-major cello theme: it is a detour that seems to trigger a host of chaotic, centrifugal energies in the first movement. In many performances, the cellos stress the errant note, as if to make a deliberate gesture of it. Abbado, however, has the cellos fade a little as they approach the C sharp, creating a twinge of unease. Throughout the opening movement, Beethoven's tendency toward triumphalism is held in check, and the darkness of the music comes to the fore. Only in the tragic landscape of the Funeral March does the orchestra let loose at full strength.

Up to this point, Abbado's "Eroica" shares the brooding atmosphere of Furtwängler's reading, in which the hero seems to be struggling not against external enemies but against an inner drive toward negation and death. Furtwängler's conception is, in every way, grander and deeper, but it has a flaw: it does not quite know what to do with the final two movements, with their unexpected playfulness and wit. At that point, the grand style becomes merely heavy. Abbado capitalizes on his prior restraint: his orchestra has energy left to burn, and it becomes an innocent, physical beast, shaking off the despair that had brought it to a standstill a few moments before. This is a subtler heroism, one in which a

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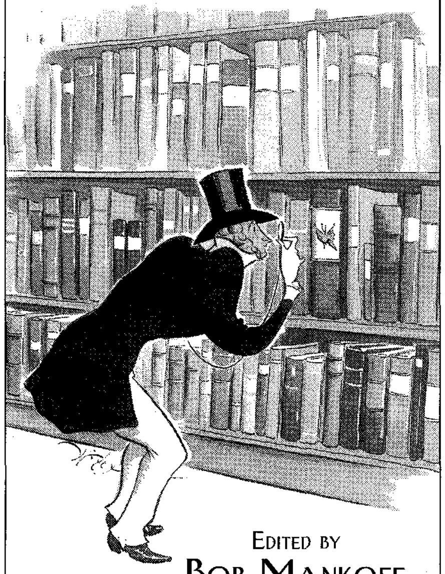

EDITED BY
BOB MANKOFF

From the stunning and the sublime to the purple and pretentious, here, in 104 drawings, are dead-on portraits and eye-opening ruminations on all things bookish, writerly, and readerly as illuminated by renowned *New Yorker* cartoonists, including Charles Barsotti, Roz Chast, Ed Koren and Victoria Roberts.

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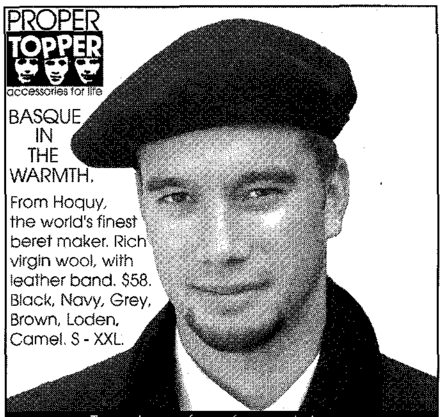
man achieves greatness by stepping back from darkness into light. His hardships become, as Beethoven wrote, "signposts of a happy life."

Scholars have often treated Beethoven as a collection of split personalities—the classicist, the heroic romantic, the musing proto-modernist. Abbado manages to erase the usual distinctions, so that the hyperdramatic Fifth Symphony is given an exceptional lyrical flow, and the "Pastorale" is capped by a storm of ear-splitting violence. The full results of the conductor's investigations can be found in a complete Beethoven cycle on the Deutsche Grammophon label, which may be the most authoritative traversal since Karajan's in the nineteen-sixties. As Beethoven cycles pile up uselessly, it is good to report on one that seems essential.

The Carnegie concerts were not all Beethoven. Maurizio Pollini joined the orchestra for a magisterial account of the Brahms D-Minor Concerto, and, on the first night, Thomas Quasthoff sang five Mahler songs: "Reveille," "Praise from a Lofty Intellect," "The Drummer Boy," "St. Anthony's Sermon to the Fishes," and "I Am Lost to the World." The pairing of Quasthoff's tiny form with Abbado's gaunt profile was a moving sight: each of these men has in some way been wounded, and each has found new strength. Quasthoff's delivery grows ever more thrillingly direct, with certain sly phrasings taken from the classic American pop-song repertory that he sings so well on the side. Loud notes are as strong as steel; soft ones settle like feathers next to your ears.

As if this were not enough, the Berliners played a string of encores: the Third Entr'acte from Schubert's "Rosamunde," a reprise of the "Egmont," and all fifteen minutes of the Prelude and Liebestod from "Tristan und Isolde." This last was a frenzy of sound that melted into almost human voices. I wasn't alone in thinking that there was something uncanny about the performance: we saw Abbado there, conducting brilliantly, but another force had taken hold. We seemed to have entered into one of those golden-age Berlin recordings, from which all the scratches had been removed and all shadows banished. ♦



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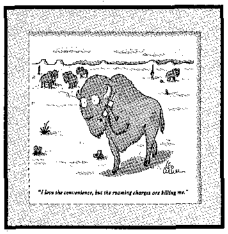

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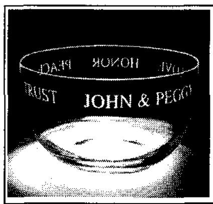

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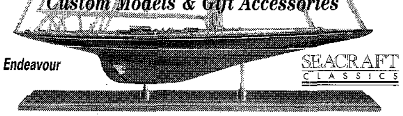

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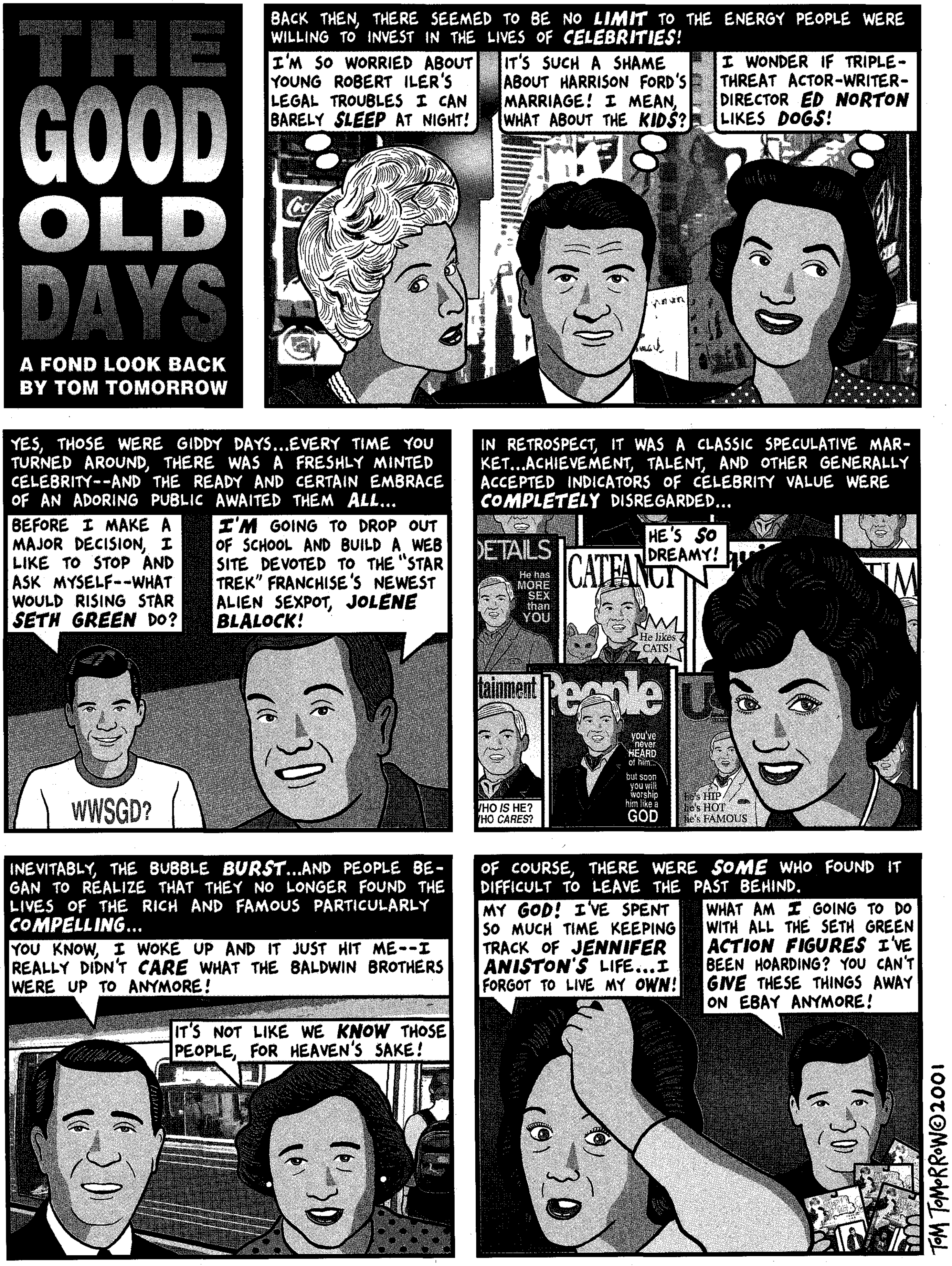
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BACK THEN, THERE SEEMED TO BE NO LIMIT TO THE ENERGY PEOPLE WERE WILLING TO INVEST IN THE LIVES OF CELEBRITIES!
I'M SO WORRIED ABOUT YOUNG ROBERT ILER'S LEGAL TROUBLES I CAN BARELY SLEEP AT NIGHT!
IT'S SUCH A SHAME ABOUT HARRISON FORD'S MARRIAGE! I MEAN, WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?
I WONDER IF TRIPLE-THREAT ACTOR-WRITER-DIRECTOR ED NORTON LIKES DOGS!
YES, THOSE WERE GIDDY DAYS...EVERY TIME YOU TURNED AROUND, THERE WAS A FRESHLY MINTED CELEBRITY--AND THE READY AND CERTAIN EMBRACE OF AN ADORING PUBLIC AWAITED THEM ALL...
BEFORE I MAKE A MAJOR DECISION, I LIKE TO STOP AND ASK MYSELF--WHAT WOULD RISING STAR SETH GREEN DO?
I'M GOING TO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL AND BUILD A WEB SITE DEVOTED TO THE "STAR TREK" FRANCHISE'S NEWEST ALIEN SEXPOT, JOLENE BLALOCK!
WWSGD?
IN RETROSPECT, IT WAS A CLASSIC SPECULATIVE MARKET...ACHIEVEMENT, TALENT, AND OTHER GENERALLY ACCEPTED INDICATORS OF CELEBRITY VALUE WERE COMPLETELY DISREGARDED...
HE'S SO DREAMY!
DETAILS
He has MORE SEX than YOU
CATFANCY
He likes CATS!
tainment
HO IS HE? HO CARES?
People
you've never HEARD of him... but soon you will worship him like a GOD
Us
he's HIP he's HOT he's FAMOUS
INEVITABLY, THE BUBBLE BURST...AND PEOPLE BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT THEY NO LONGER FOUND THE LIVES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS PARTICULARLY COMPELLING...
YOU KNOW, I WOKE UP AND IT JUST HIT ME--I REALLY DIDN'T CARE WHAT THE BALDWIN BROTHERS WERE UP TO ANYMORE!
IT'S NOT LIKE WE KNOW THOSE PEOPLE, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!
OF COURSE, THERE WERE SOME WHO FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO LEAVE THE PAST BEHIND.
MY GOD! I'VE SPENT SO MUCH TIME KEEPING TRACK OF JENNIFER ANISTON'S LIFE...I FORGOT TO LIVE MY OWN!
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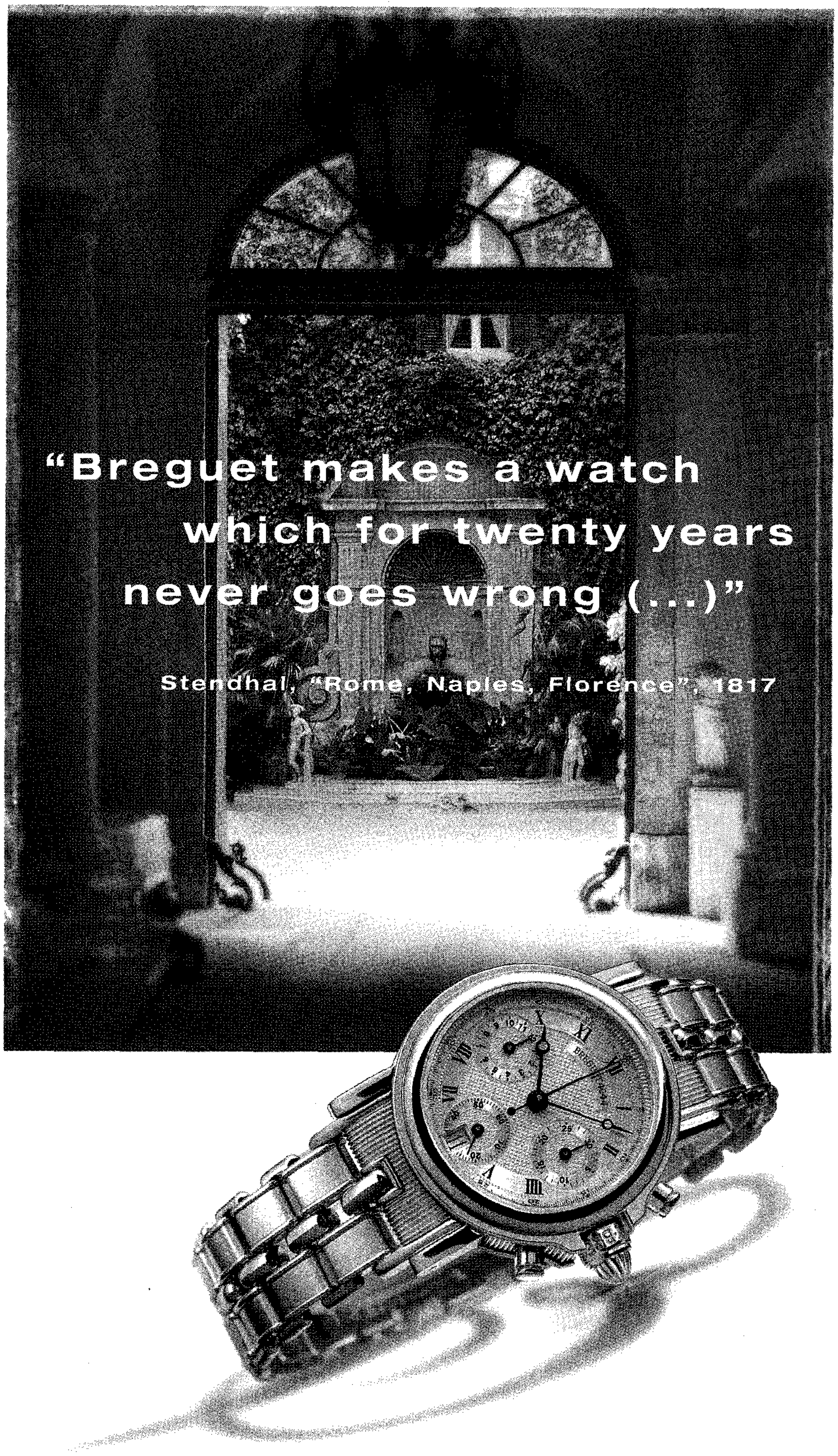
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